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Breaching the Divide: An Inquiry into Border Passage

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Breaching the Divide
An Inquiry into Border Passage

Project by Russell Scheer
Thesis Advisor: Professor Elizabeth Kamell
Fall 2016 - Spring 2017

Thesis Prep Research in collaboration with Maal Ashkar

DEDICATION

To my beloved father Steven Scheer, whose dedication inspired my own. He wanted to see the end of this project and kept me motivated throughout the entire year. His memory lives on through me.

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1

CONTENTION

In a world of increasing divisiveness and nationalist politics that belie economic codependence and efforts directed at global sustainability, the boundaries surrounding nations emphasize their differences between cultures, religions and territories rather than common purpose. Despite shared objectives, borders, divisions, demilitarized zones and walls that mark and represent irreconcilable difference, persist. In fact, their presence may be the only thing that maintains peaceful coexistence.

Physically, borders manifest themselves as a series of layered architectural elements on a landscape, each intended to strengthen control over movement and exchange. Although the official function of a border is to separate, divide, and guarantee that things do not mix, in practice a border can also form a meeting place and serves as a conveyor belt between the separated parts. Ultimately, a border is a contradictory structure that simultaneously prevents and permits, separates and connects, and that consequently provides its own tools for circumventing itself.

The wall that divides intertwining borders of Israel and the West Bank is such a division. Palestinians and Israelis pass along and cross through the wall everyday, engage in trade, and lay claim and pray in the same ancient, religious places. But the wall separates, marking stark difference in resources, access and freedom of movement. This project is an inquiry into the existing threshold that currently separates Israelis from Palestinians in the West Bank. Through the dismantling of the Israeli border checkpoint and reinterpretation of its parts, this project reimagines the sequence of passing through the threshold. By framing the mundane activities of border passage through dramatic scenes, this architecture can reveal themes religion, resources, and surveillance. This architecture also intends to highlight the imbalance of the current conflict and those involved in it, by creating an architecture equally absurd.



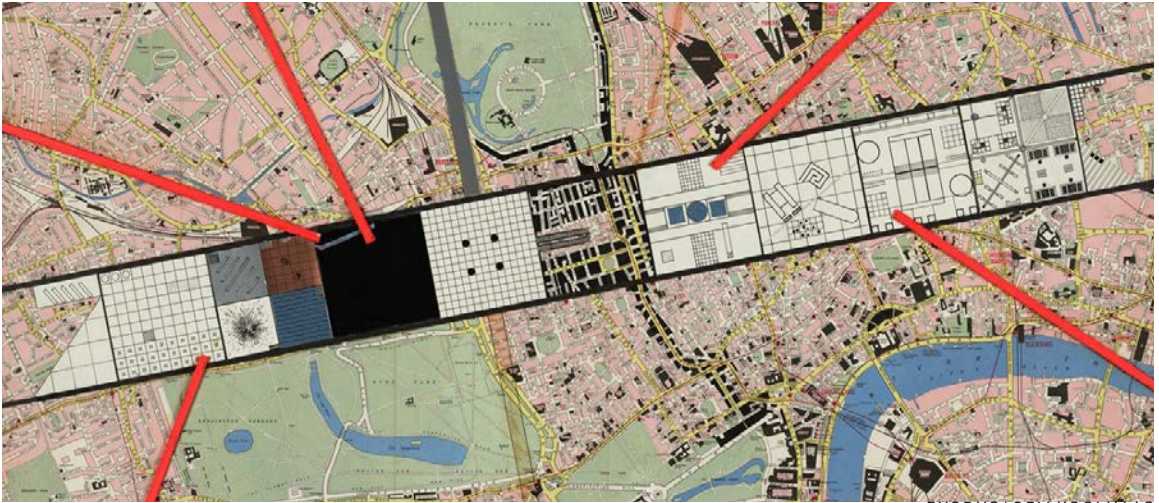
AP PHOTO/MAJDI MOHAMMED

CURRENT STRATEGY

The current strategy for the division between Israel and the West Bank territories employed by the State of Israel is one which is intended to create a more secure and defensible life for all Israelis while giving Palestinian people a boundary of land to call their own. In many cases, Israel is considered safer in recent decades, though it has also caused extreme unrest within the West Bank territories. The elements deployed by Israelis have led to a restricted society with invasive security checkpoints, an oppressive border patrol, and the confiscation of land. The politics of constructing new settlements that encroach upon Palestinian territories has forced Palestinian villages to struggle through their daily lives, causing constant conflict.

“Boundaries by their very nature, are supposed to impart a sense of closure, or fictionality, of limits. However, more than six decades after the founding of Israel, and more than a decade since the Oslo Agreements established an independent Palestinian state (in parts of) the West Bank and Gaza, there remains considerable uncertainty over the actual territorial limits of Israel’s boundaries.”

-Lebbeus Woods



EXODUS | REM KOOLHAAS

AIMS

The West Bank, through the slow erosion of transit, social interaction, and economic growth, has become a plighted land with little to no resources. With this in mind, the structure of the separation wall as well as the elements that reinforce it must be rethought to address its issues of urbanity. The intended proposal would confront the concerns of Palestinians and Israelis head on. The main trepidation with the possibility for a re-envisioned wall is that the wall has manifested itself through various elements of border security already. These elements may be as literal as a trench and concrete barricade, or as figurative as the placement of an Israeli community to watch a Palestinian one from above. Rem Koolhaas' thesis project makes references to a dividing wall as a method of curing the difficulties between people of varying socioeconomic classes. His idea critiqued the existing divisions within the city of London by imagining a city, which intentionally divides its people based on their socio-economic backgrounds. In this re-imagined city, like refugees, the people of the more plighted side overwhelmingly wished to join the side beyond the wall in search for better opportunity.

"After all attempts to interrupt this undesirable migration had failed, the authorities of the bad part made desperate and savage use of architecture: they built a wall around the good part of the city, making it completely inaccessible to their subjects.

The wall was a masterpiece."

- Rem Koolhaas

2

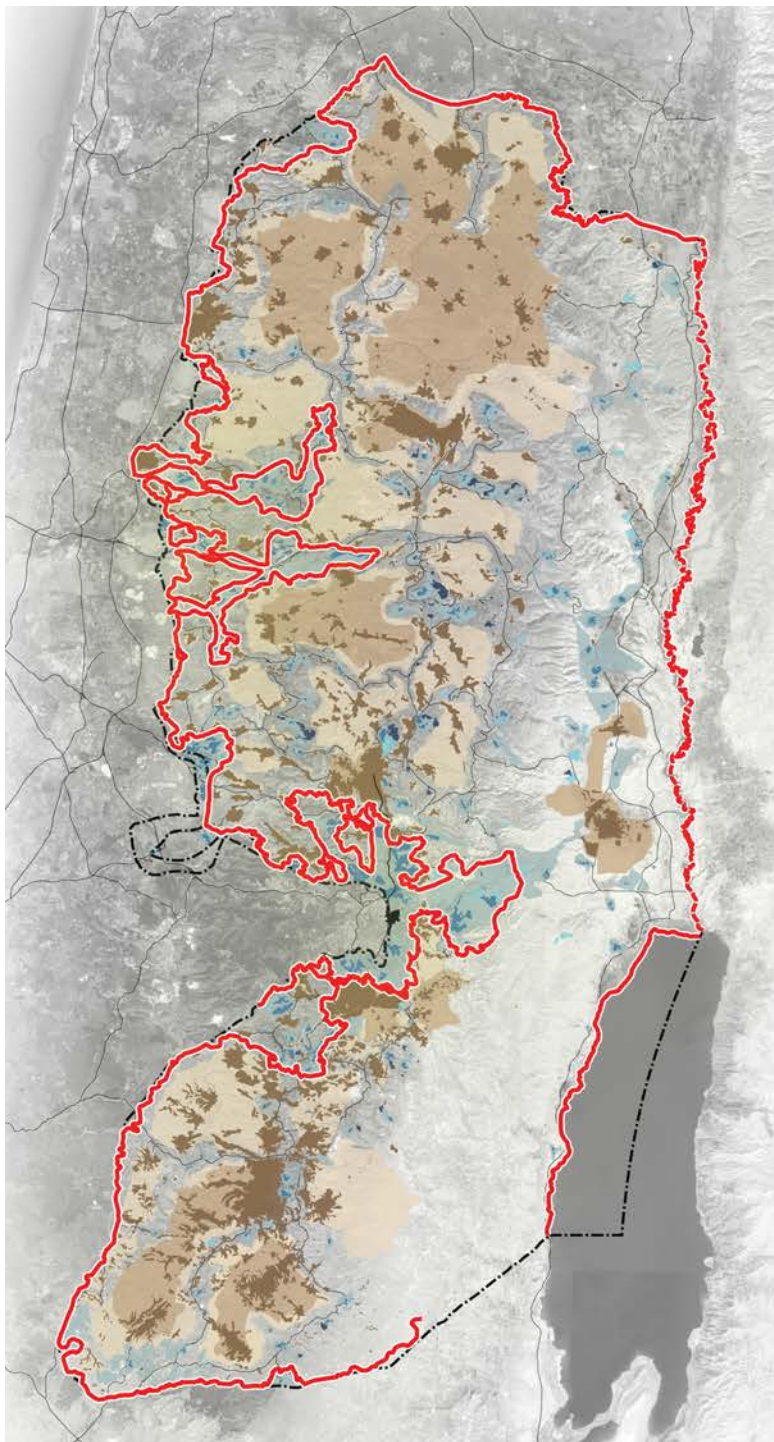
THE CONFLICT





MIDDLE EAST SITUATION





THE CONFLICT

The highly contested history between Israelis and Palestinians can be traced back to nearly the time of the Hebrews and Philistines in the earliest years of developed civilization in the Middle East. For hundreds of years, Jews and Arabs lived quite peacefully within the land now known as Israel and the West Bank. These two populations are now politically and culturally separated, but quite often they live only a couple hundred feet from each other. The basis for this thesis project will be to address the role of the architectural elements used to physically divide the people of Palestine and Israel.

“The heavy toll of living in a physically segregated environment calls

for a concerted effort to understand the logic that governs divided cities. Divided city residents grapple with life under siege. Unlike soldiers, destined to leave the battlefield in one condition or another, the inhabitants of war-torn cities confront their terrors at home without means of retreat or escape. Even after politicians have secured a peace, the citizens struggle with losses that are beyond compensation and regret missed opportunities. A social contract is broken along the path to urban partition, and the costs of renegotiation tend to be high”

- Calame



FOR THE ISRAELIS

Israel is 68 years old, but to thousands of Jewish people, this place is considered a home forever. For many, the State of Israel is a beacon of hope, a place of refuge for when the world has turned on them. For others, it symbolizes the beginning of time, the place where Abraham arrived with his family by the word of God.

“The Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him.”

-Genesis 12:5-7

FOR THE PALESTINIANS

In 1948, when war broke out and Arab armies went to war with the newly declared State of Israel, thousands of Palestinians fled their homes. They initially believed their exile was to be brief. In the manner of other civilians who are forced to abandon their homes in the midst of battle, they assumed they would return to the life they had left behind.

“The keys are still kept by Palestinian families today symbolic of the enduring demand of their ‘right to return’ the dream of returning to the land and homes they left behind.”

-The Keys of Palestine, Zed Nelson

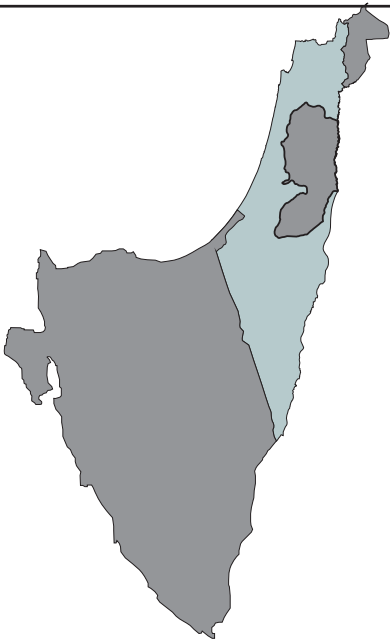
Shoshan, Malkit. Atlas of the
Conflict: Israel - Palestine.
Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010, 2010.

CONTROL OF THE LAND

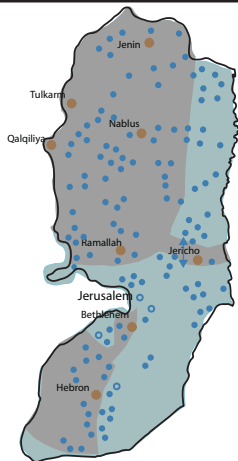
1949



1973



1976
ALLON PLAN



1978
DROBLESS SETTLEMENT PLAN



- Territory under Arab authority
- Territory under Israeli authority
- Territory to return to Jordan
- Major Arab City
- Israeli Settlement
- New Israeli Settlement
- Existing Settlement Annexed to Israel

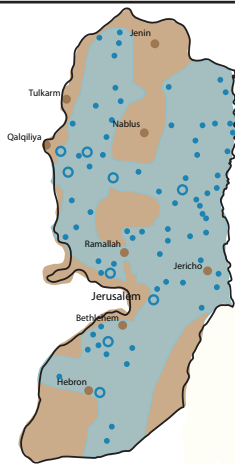
2000



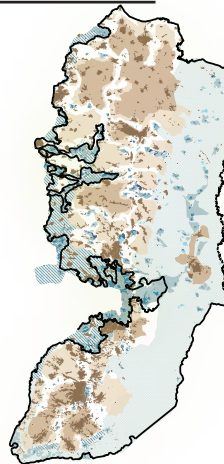
2010



1981
SHARON PLAN

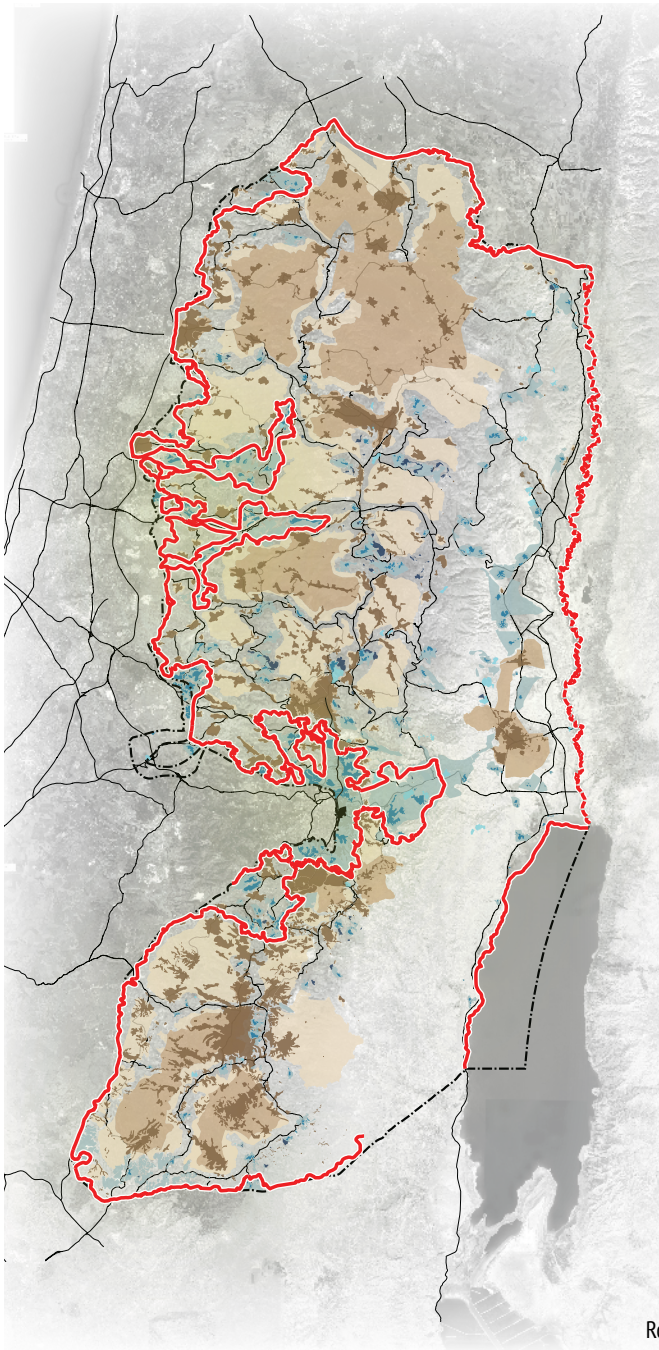


2016
SHARON PLAN

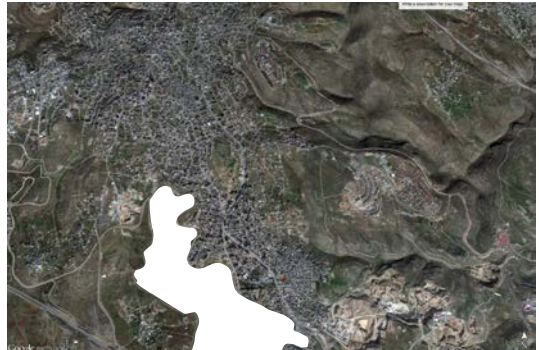


Shoshan, Malkit. Atlas of the
Conflict: Israel - Palestine.
Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010, 2010.

The West Bank



Shoshan, Malkit. Atlas of the
Conflict: Israel - Palestine.
Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010, 2010.



GOOGLE EARTH SCREENSHOT

PARAMETERS URBAN SCALE

The Israeli method of separation allows them to build within the so called “boundary limits”, but many of the Israeli settlements have successfully wedged themselves between pre-existing Palestinian villages. These new settlements have been strategically placed upon hilltops and usually with a large boundary of land surrounding them for extra security measures. The locational parameters of this thesis will be set to that same interstitial space between the Israeli settlement and the Palestinian town that is currently being used as a security buffer zone.



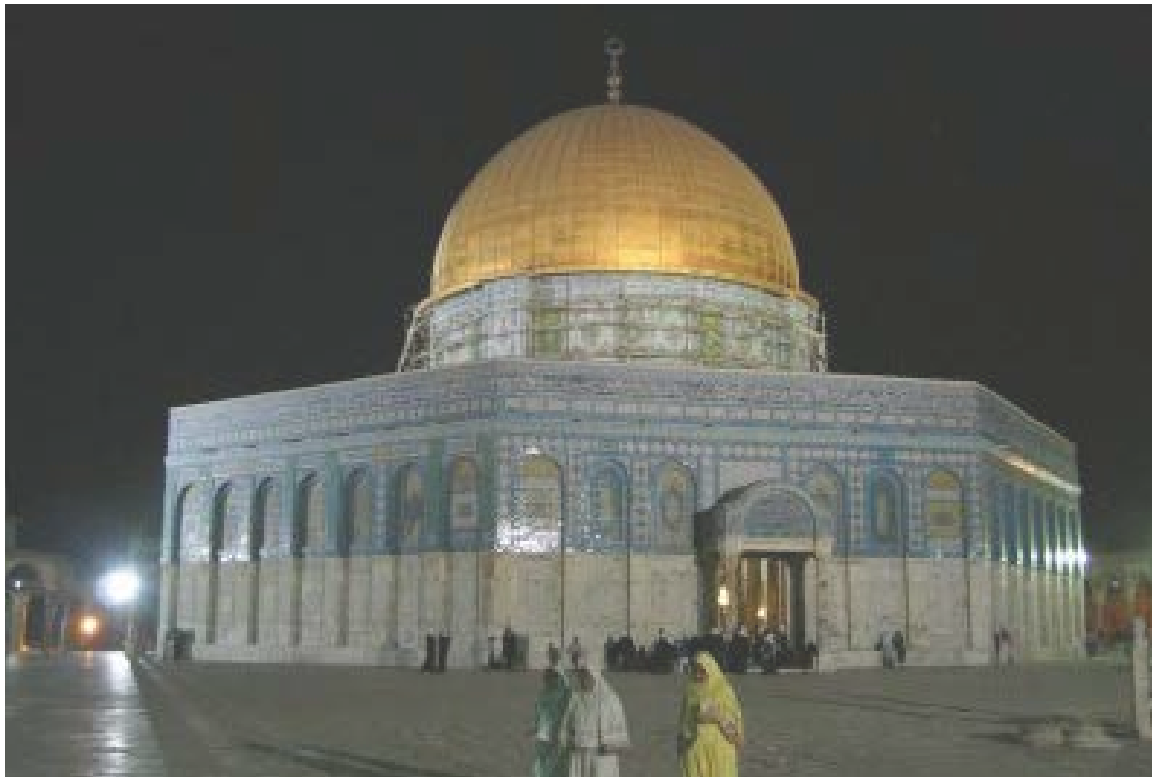
DIVISION OF RELIGION



Inspired by Botticelli's
Annunciation

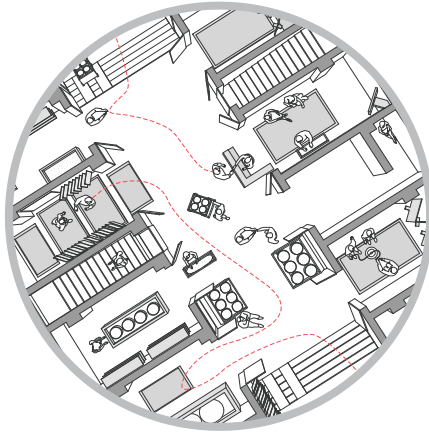


Wailing WALL at the Temple mount in Jerusalem
Photo by Des Runyan



Dome of the rock at temple mount
Photo by Taha raja

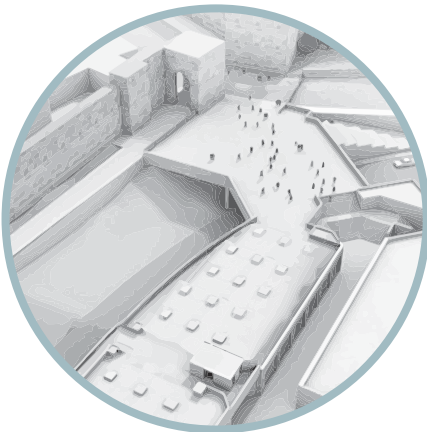
DIVISION IN THE HOLY CITY



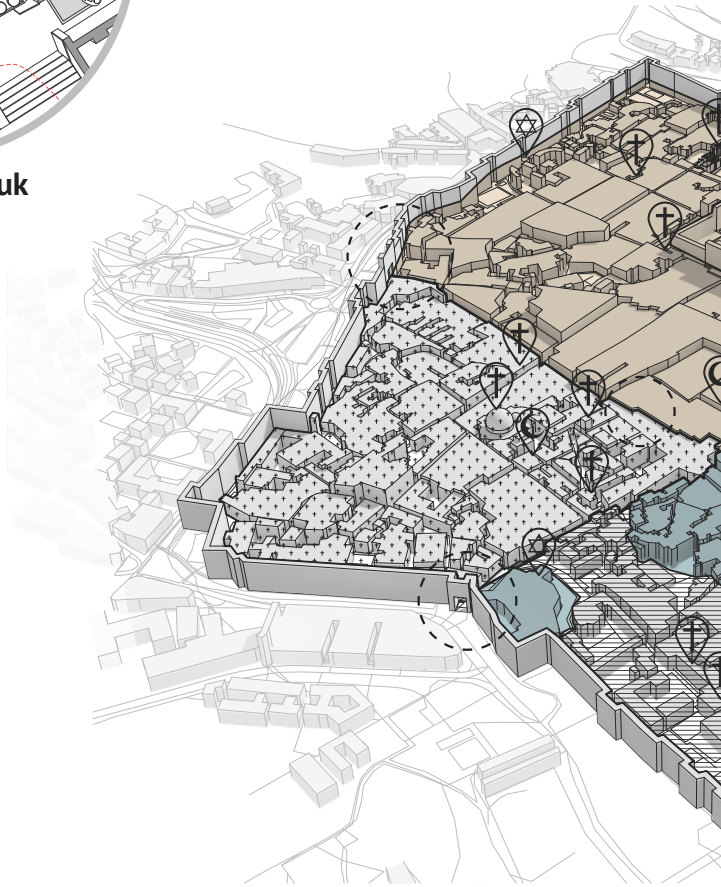
Jerusalem Souk



Damascus Gate

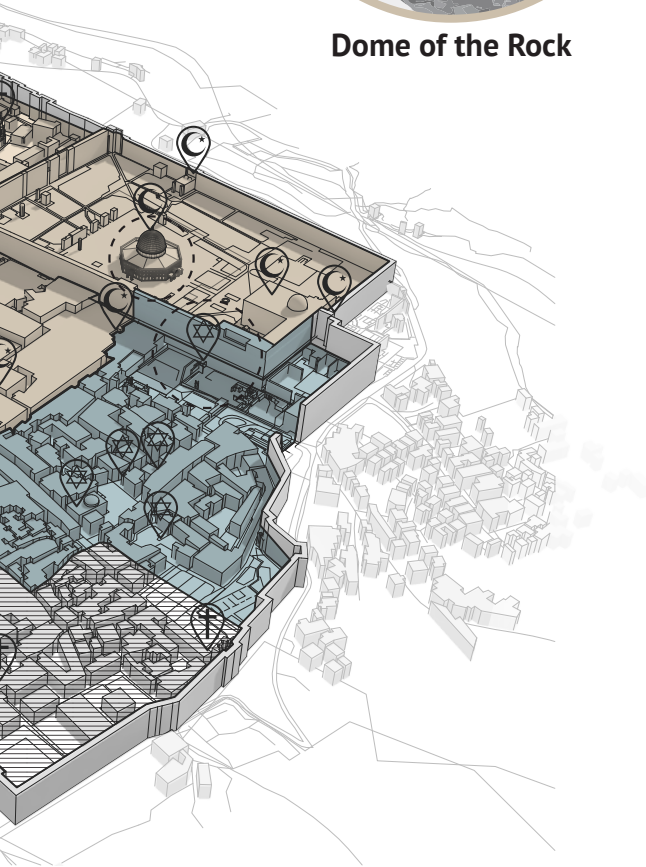


Jaffa Gate









Dome of the Rock

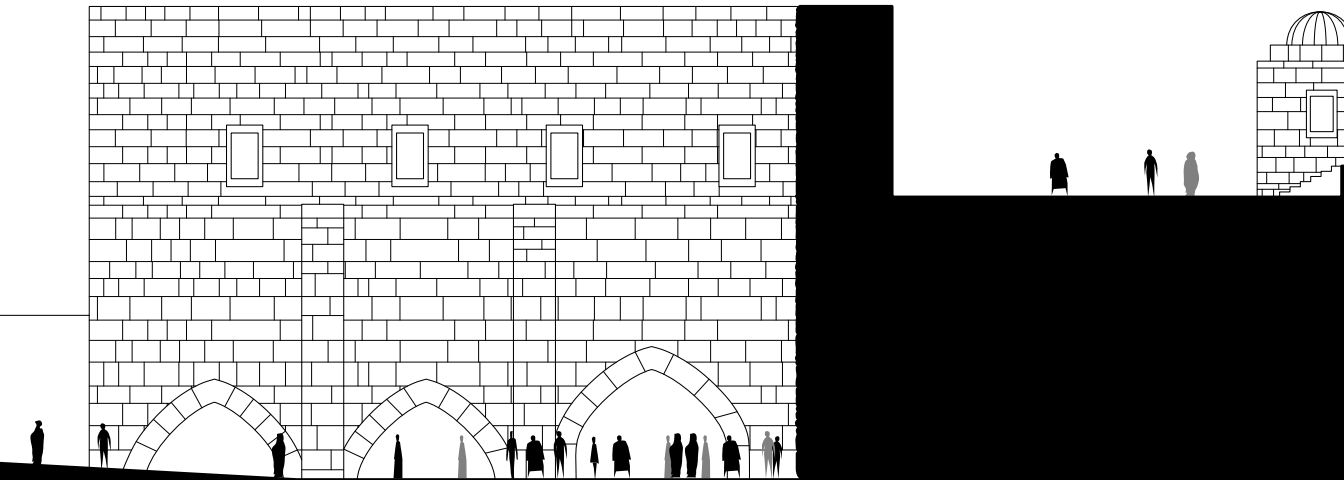


Western (Wailing) Wall

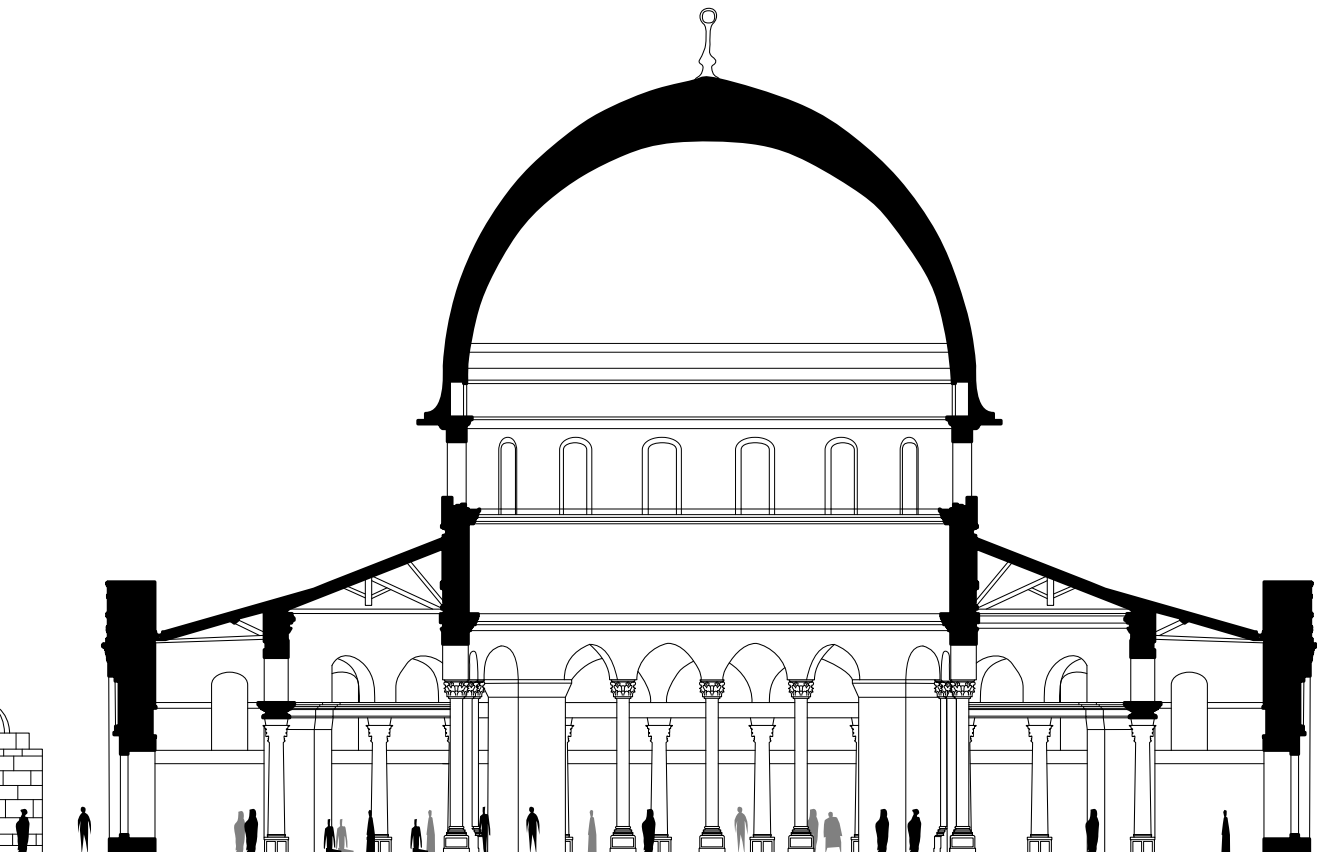
-  Muslim Quarter
-  Jewish Quarter
-  Christian Quarter
-  Armenian Quarter

DIVISION AT THE TEMPLE MOUNT

WAILING WALL COMPLEX



DOME OF THE ROCK





DIVISION OF RESOURCES



Inspired by Leonardo Da Vinci's
Annunciation



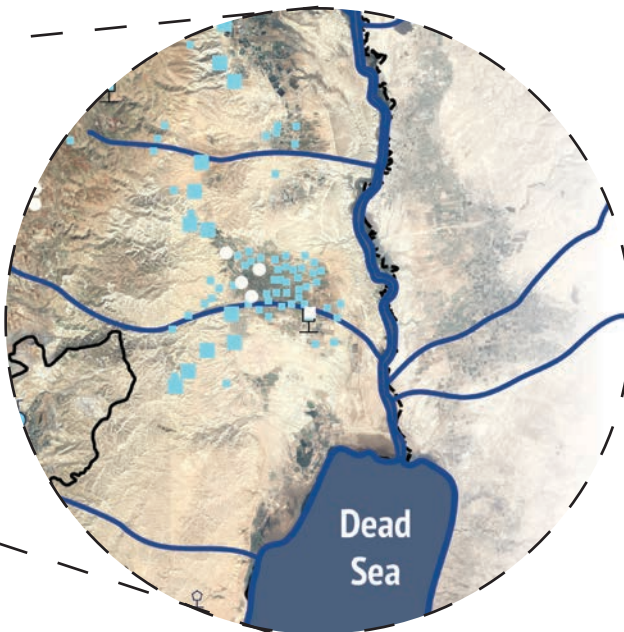
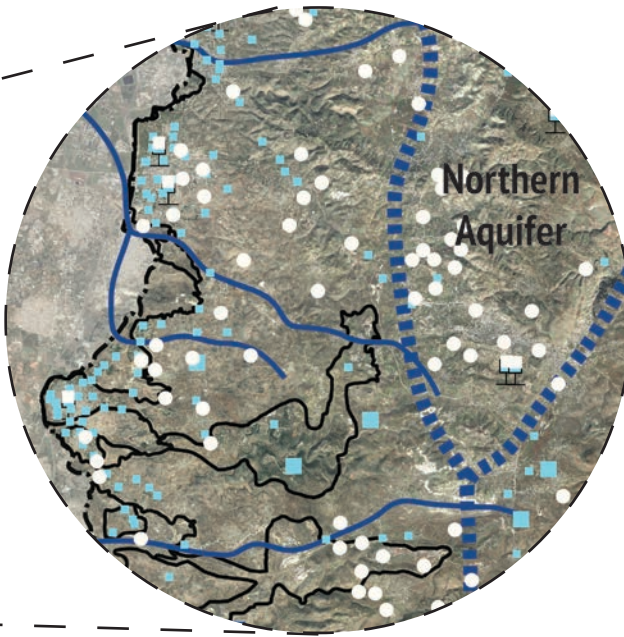
Waiting WALL at the Temple mount in Jerusalem
Photo by Ma'an



An Israeli bulldozer carries uprooted olive trees to make way for Israel's separation wall, in the West Bank town of Beit Jala
Photo by Oren Ziv

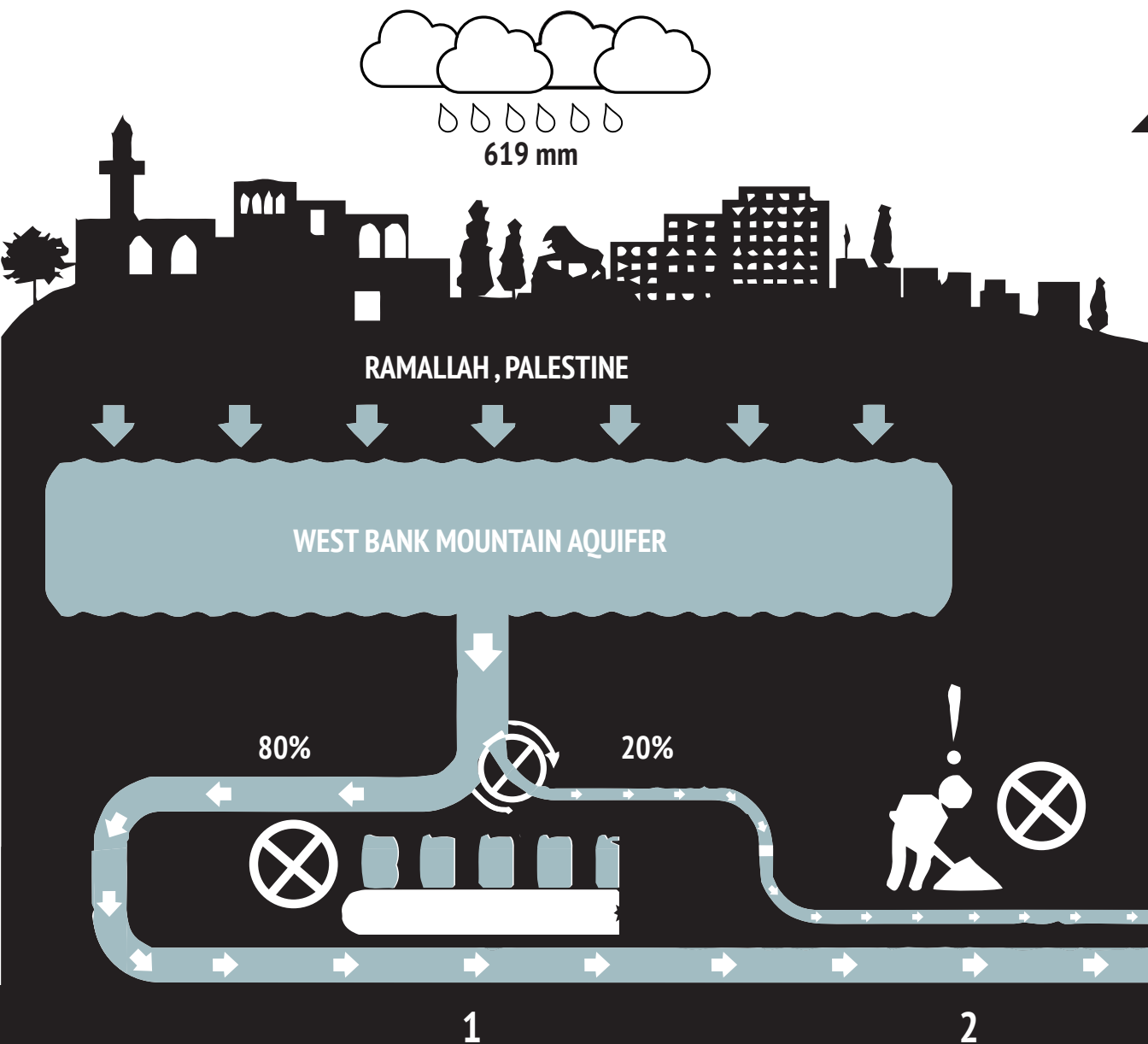
DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES

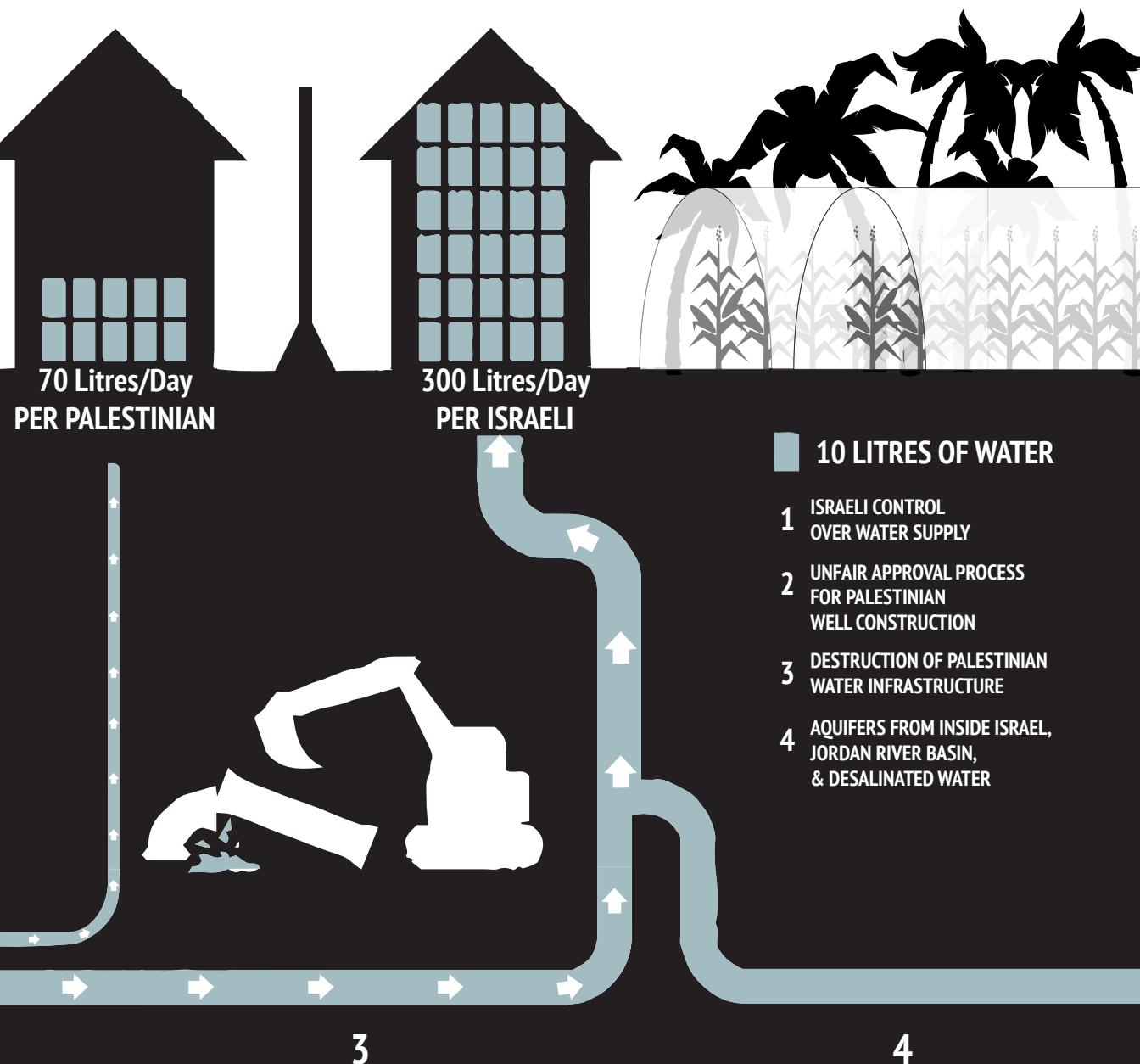




- Palestinian Pumping Station
- Palestinian Well
- Israeli Pumping Station
- Israeli Well
- Aquifer
- Water Source
- Border Wall
- - 1967 Green Line

PALESTINIAN WATER IS ISRAELI WATER

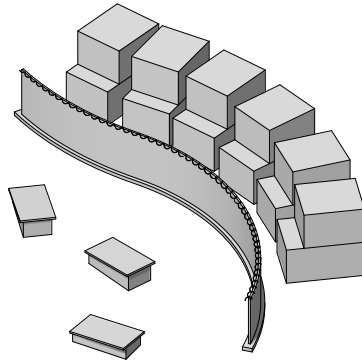




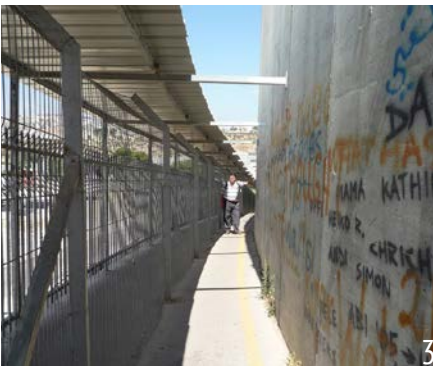
CONDITIONS ALONG THE WALL



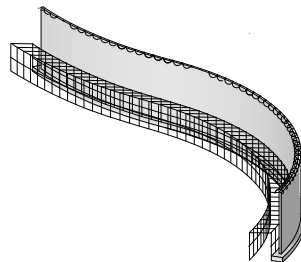
1. Temporary housing alongside the wall.
(Panoramio)



2. The wall becomes a billboard for graffiti artists, even Banksy. (Panoramio)

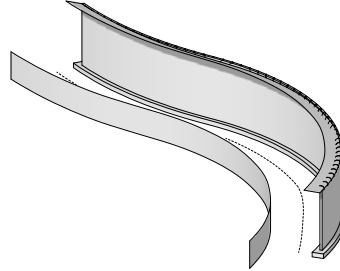


7. The pedestrian checkpoints along the border wall. This is where Palestinians wait in line to pass into Israel. (Panoramio)

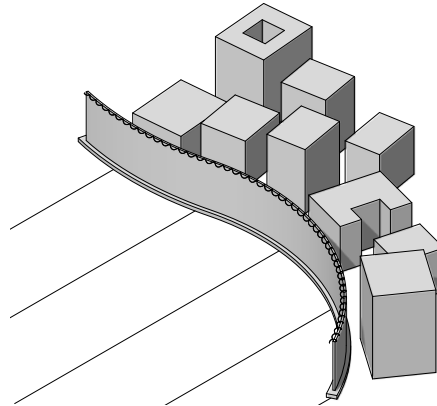




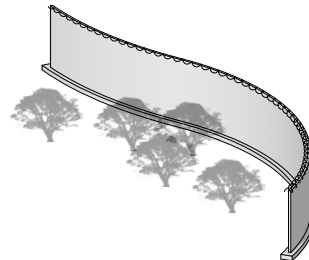
4. A road along the border wall is meant to keep pedestrians from directly interacting with it.



5. The wall borders a city cutting it completely from any open land.



6. Area surrounding the West Bank wall is often used for agriculture and herding animals.





SURVEILLANCE



Inspired by Fra. Angelico's
Annunciation

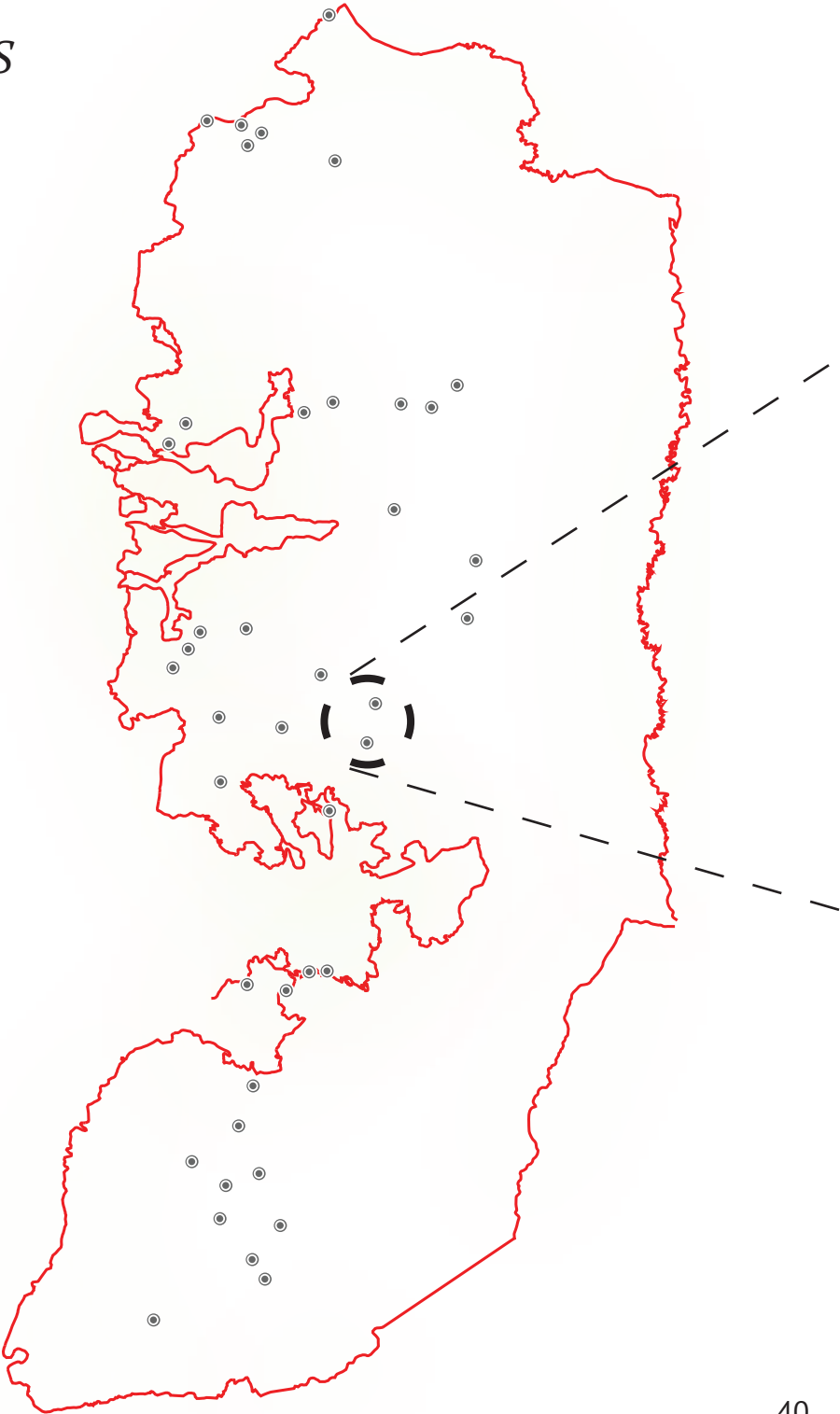


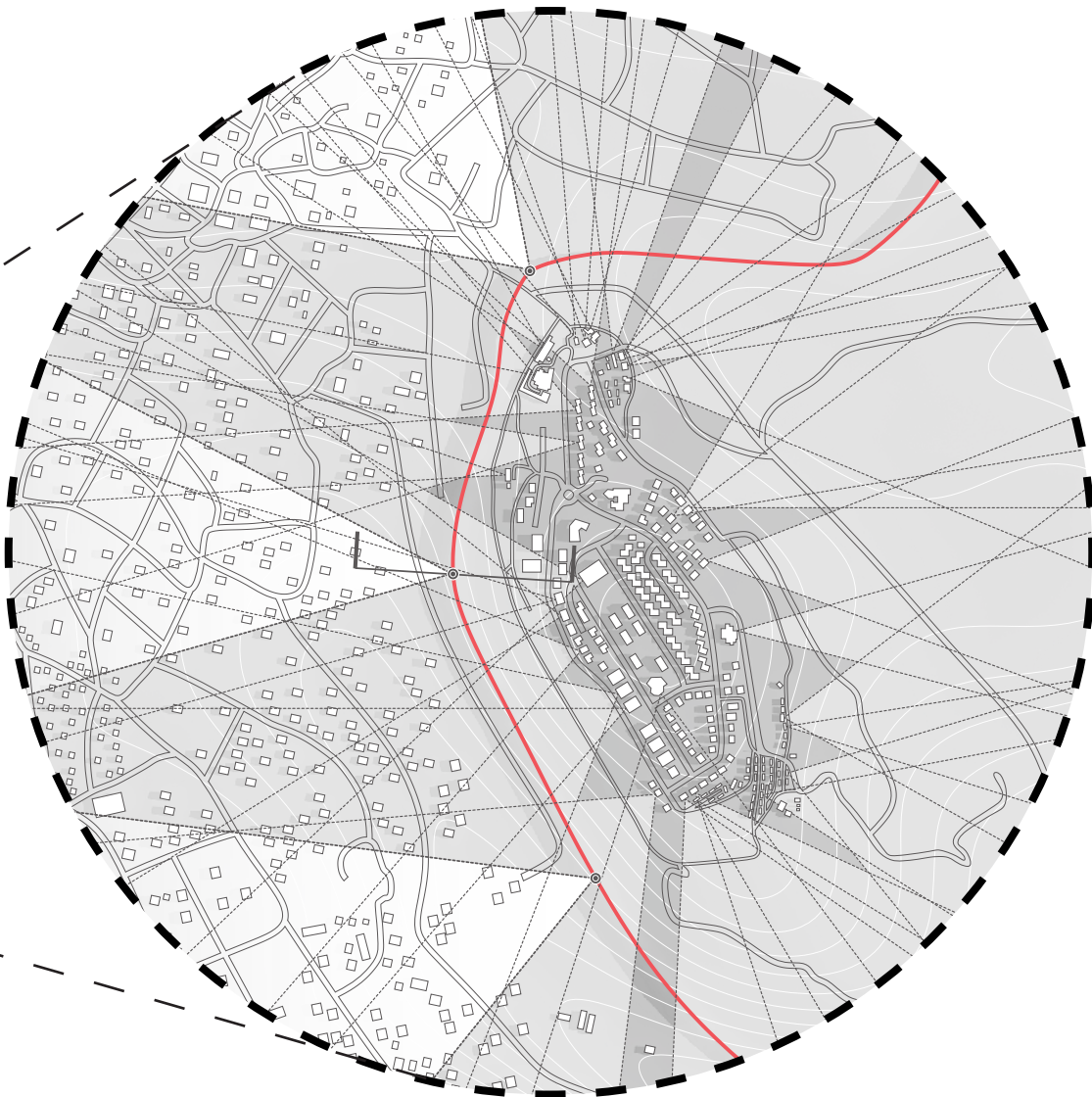
The line outside Qalandiya Checkpoint where the Israeli military safely watches over Palestinians making there way across the wall.
Photo by Karam Saleem



The Eli settlement (foreground), pictured in 2015, overlooks Palestinian villages in the West Bank.
Photo by Tomas Munita

WATCHTOWERS

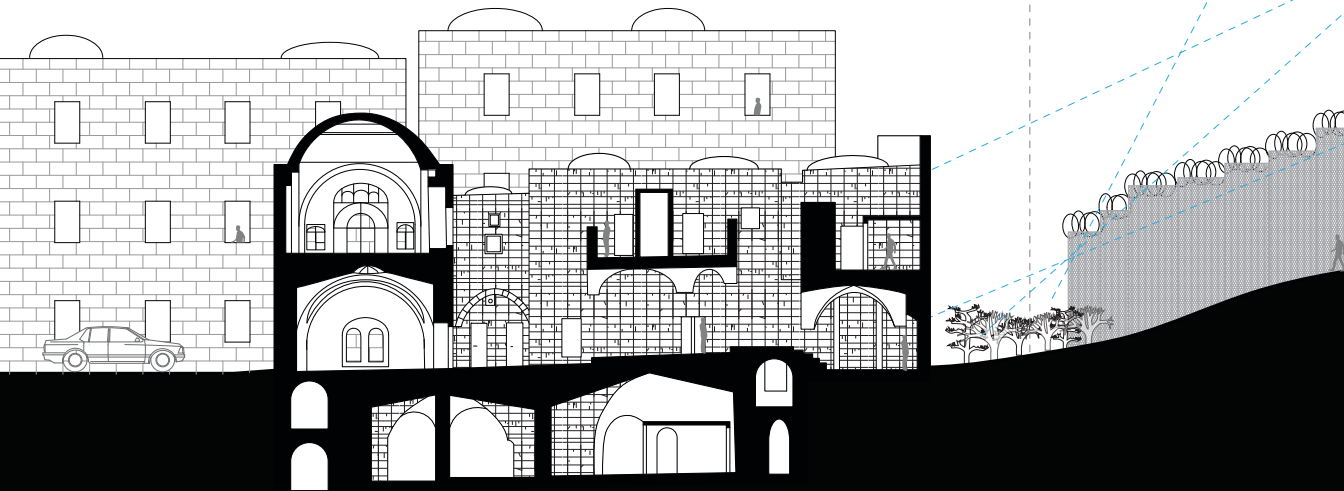




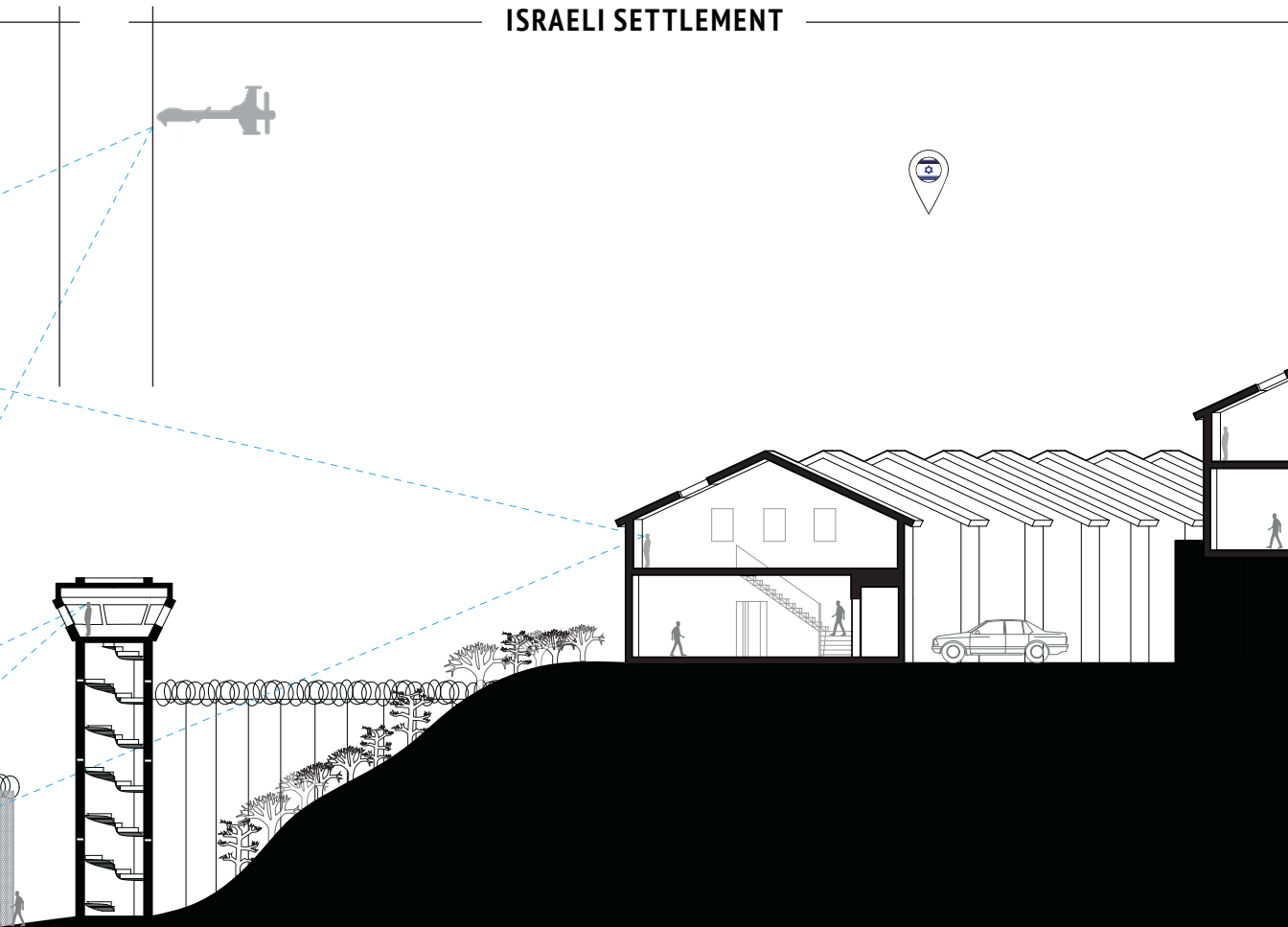
SURVEILLANCE IN THE WEST BANK

Settlements built within the West Bank each have specific tactics to maintain a secure livelihood. These elements of security include the watchtower, the wall, and the topographical elevation of the settlement. The Israeli settlement Psgot is located on the cusp of the Palestinian capital, Ramallah. In the case of Ramallah, the wall and watchtowers have a direct relationship with both people. In the case of the Palestinians, this wall represents the prison wall and its watchtowers. Getting close to the wall is considered an offense to the Israelis. While the Israeli settlements see the wall as the only separation between the people. The only thing maintaining coexistence.

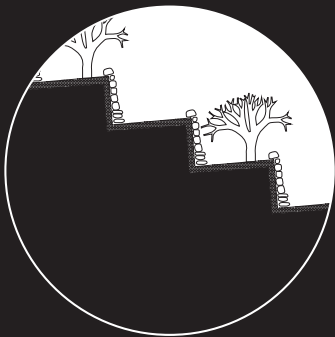
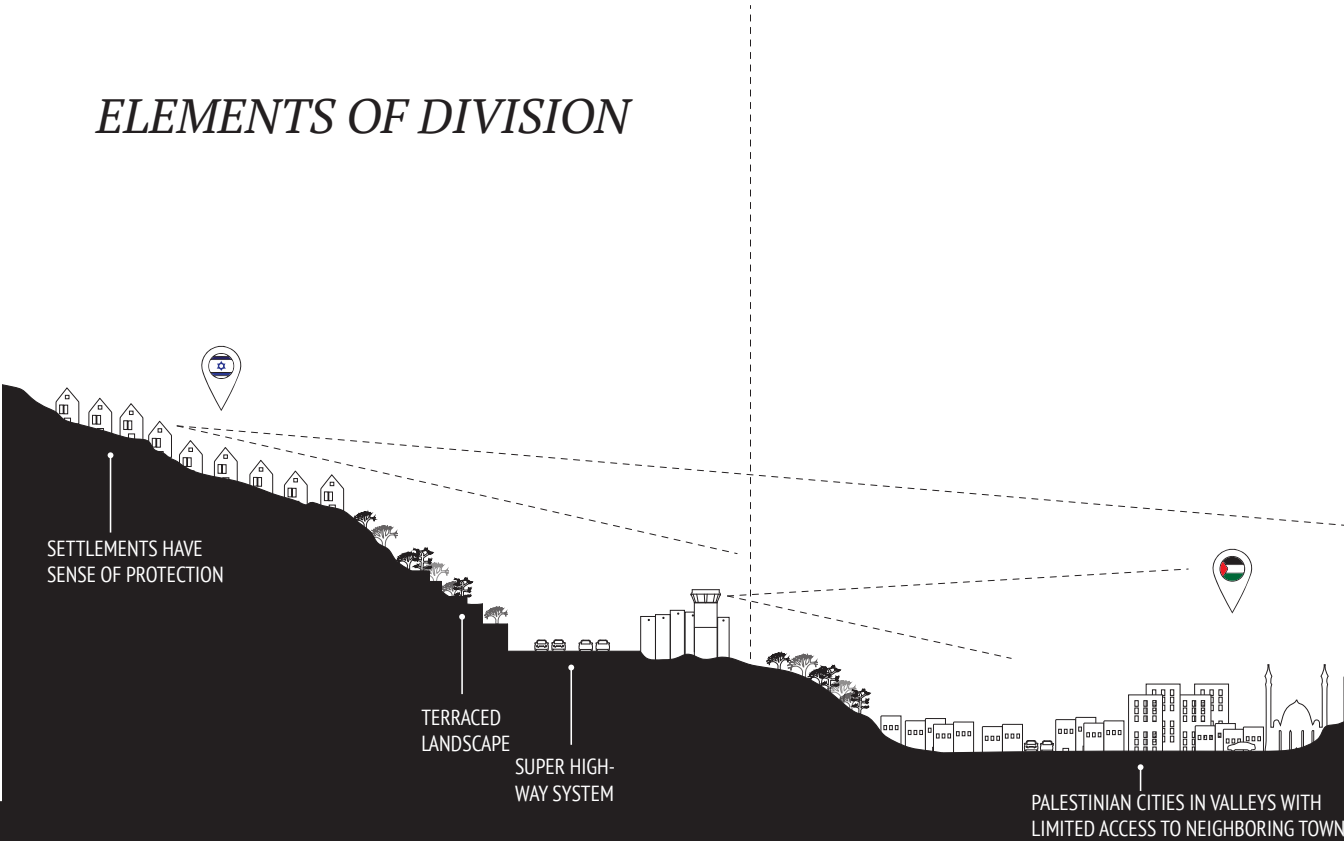
RAMALLAH



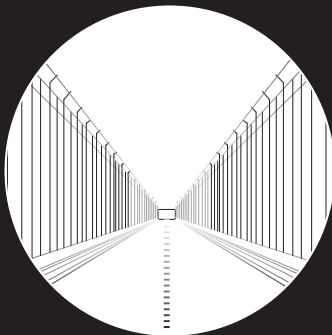
ISRAELI SETTLEMENT



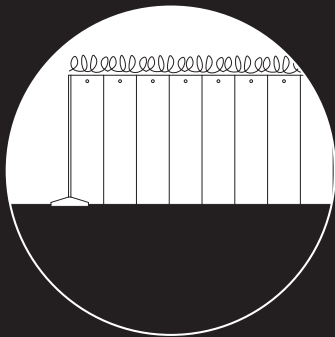
ELEMENTS OF DIVISION



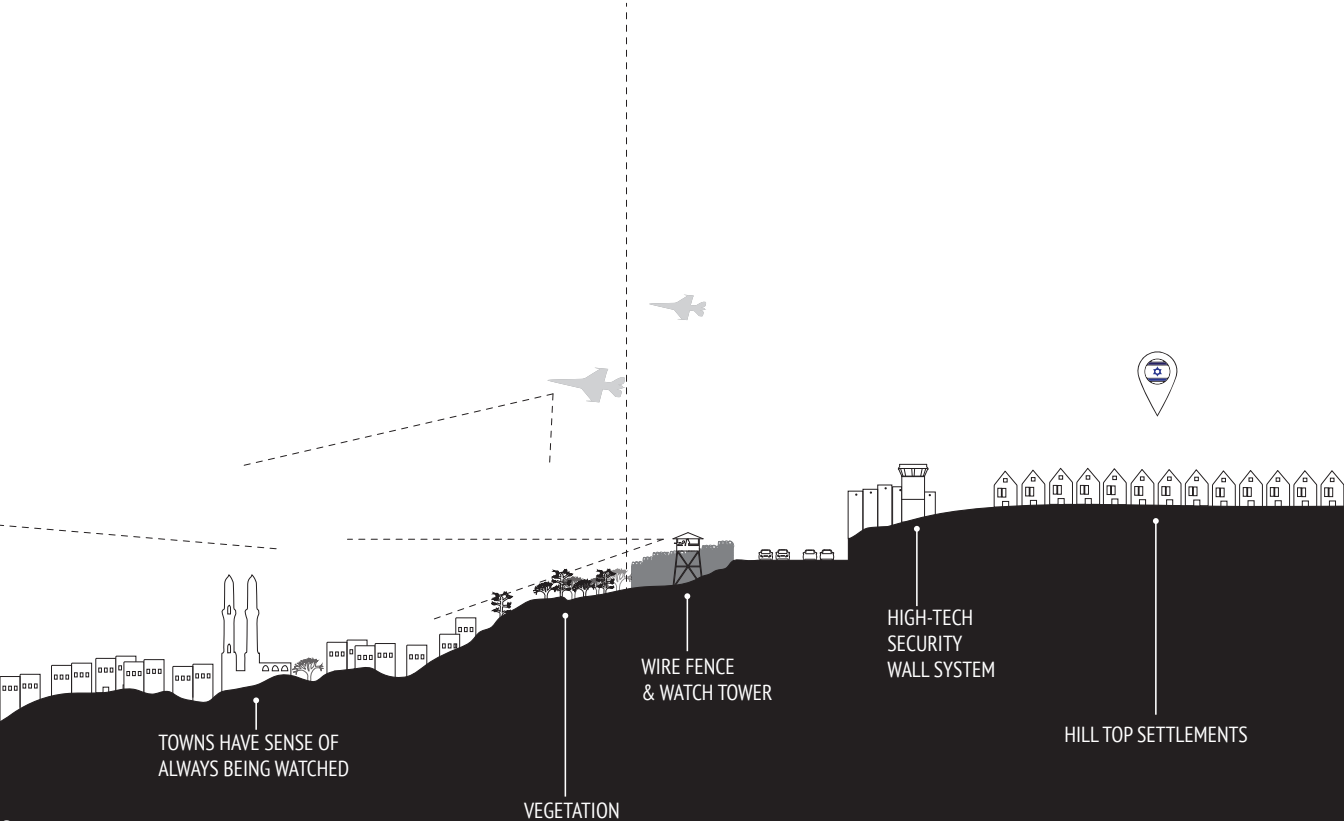
TERRACED LANDSCAPE



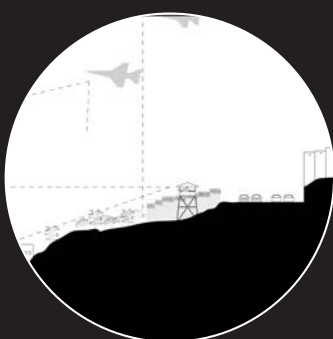
SUPER HIGHWAY SYSTEM



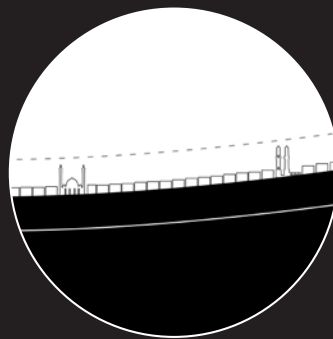
CONCRETE BORDER WALL



WATCHTOWER



SECURITY BUFFER ZONE



SUBTERRAIN, SURFACE & AIR

"The horizon became a political boundary, separating the air from the ground. At the same time, another boundary – dividing the crust of the ground from the earth under it – has appeared. In the West Bank, the sub-terrain and the air have come to be seen as separated from, rather than continuous and organic to, the surface of the earth. The 'Politics of Verticality' entails the re-visioning of existing cartographic techniques. It requires an Escher-like representation of space, a territorial hologram in which political acts of manipulation and multiplication of the territory transform a two-dimensional surface into a three-dimensional volume."

-Eyal Weizman



OPPRESSION OF MOVEMENT



Inspired by Fra. Filippo Lippi's
Martelli Annunciation

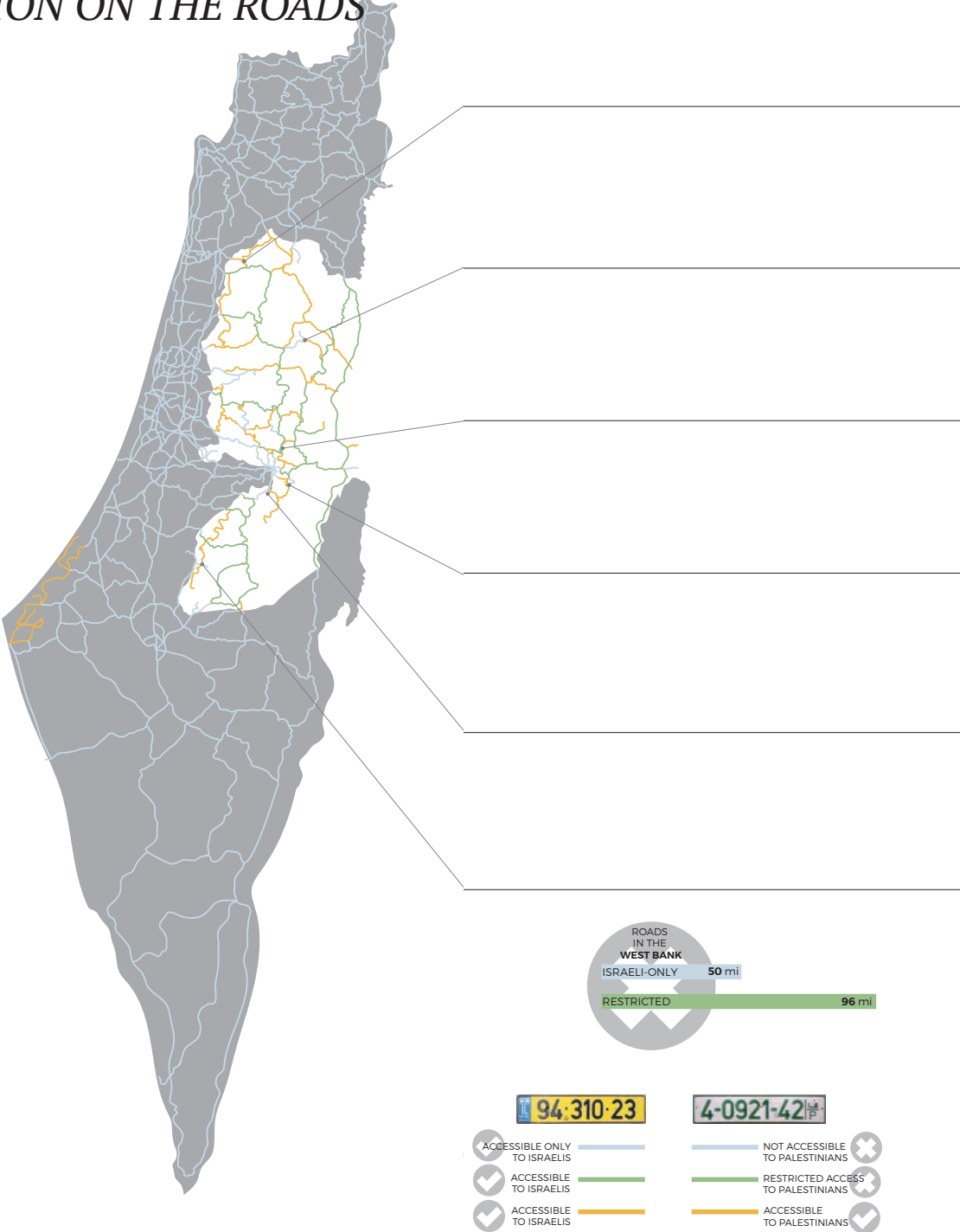


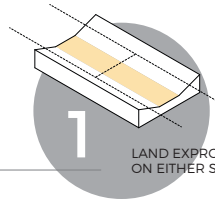
Palestinian Men crossing the border Illegally.
Photo by Karam Saleem



Qalandia checkpoint on Ramadan
Photo by Clare W.

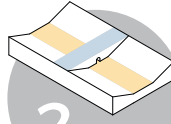
DIVISION ON THE ROADS





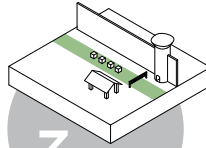
1

LAND EXPROPRIATED BY ISRAEL
ON EITHER SIDE OF THE ROAD.



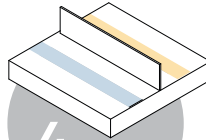
2

UNDERPASS ROADS BETWEEN
PALESTINIAN ENCLAVES, WITH
ACCESS OFTEN RESTRICTED BY
GATES.



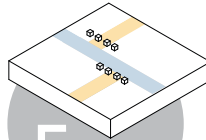
3

CHECKPOINTS ALONG AND
ADJACENT TO ALL RESTRICTED
ROADS.



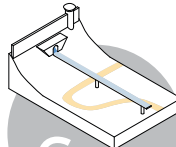
4

FULLY SEGREGATED ROADS
RUNNING IN PARELLEL TO ONE
ANOTHER.



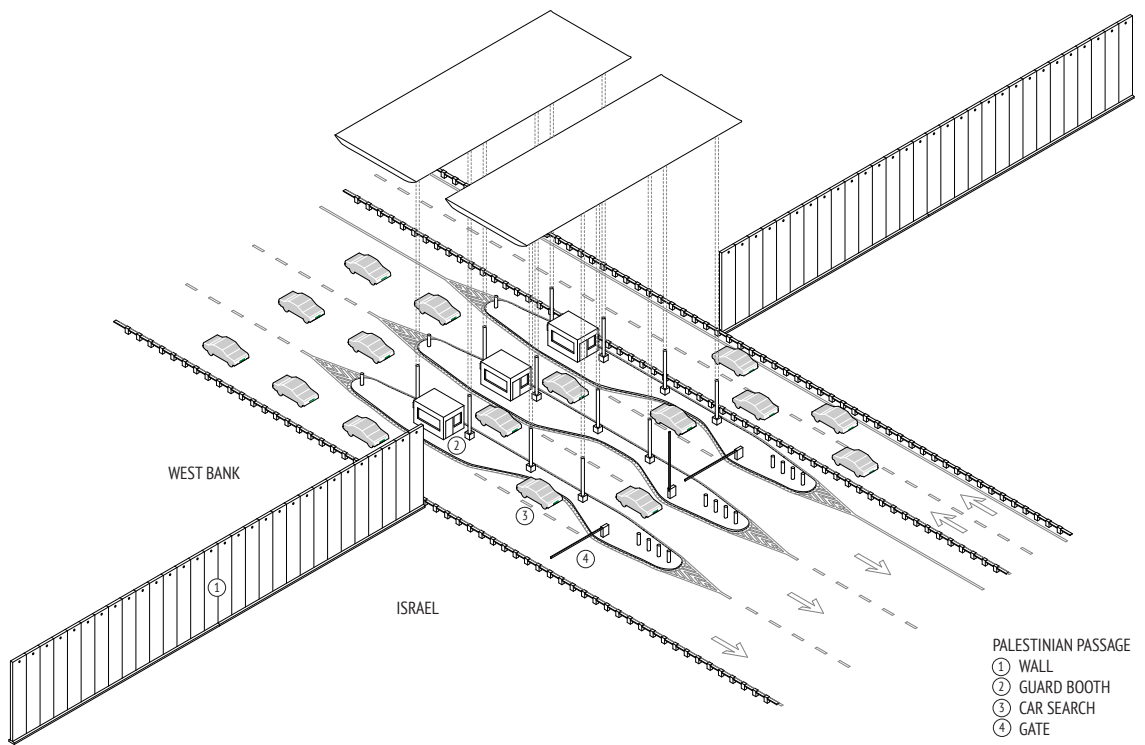
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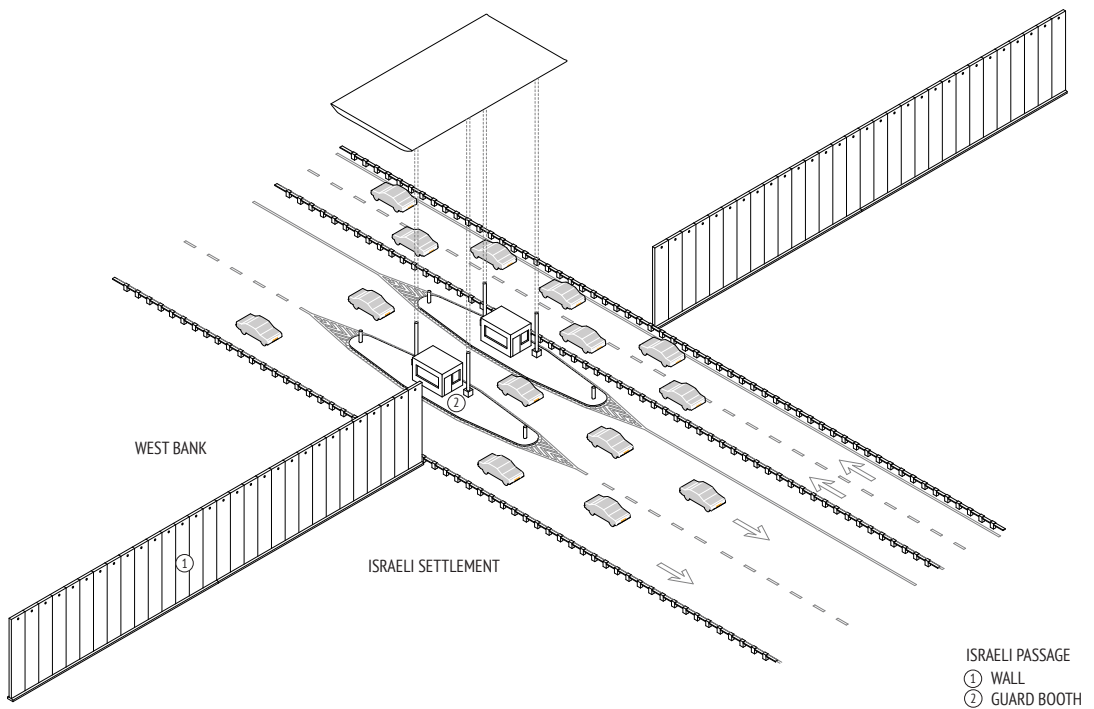
ROAD BLOCKS/TRENCHES
PREVENT ACCESS TO MAIN
ROADS AND TRAVEL BETWEEN
PALESTINIAN ENCLAVES.

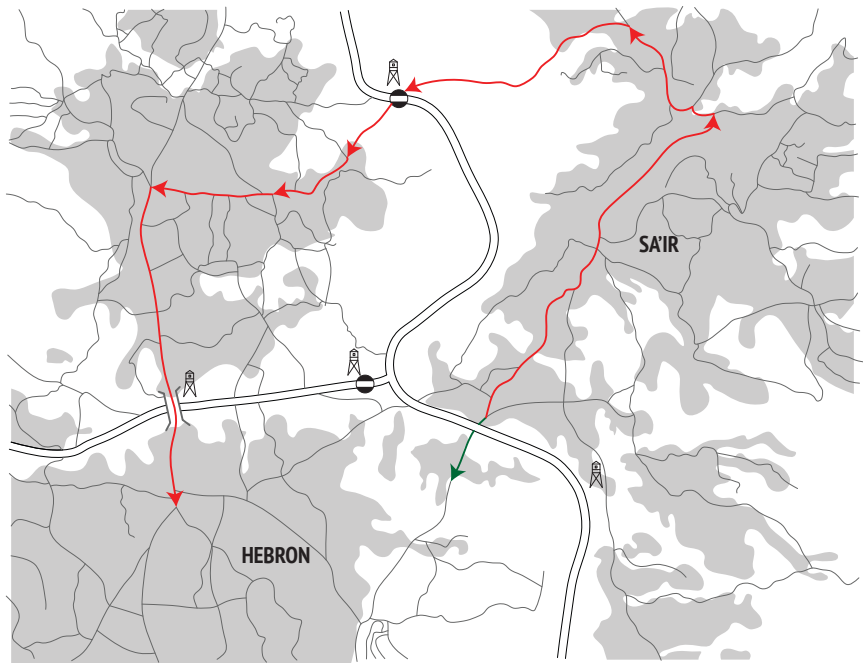


6

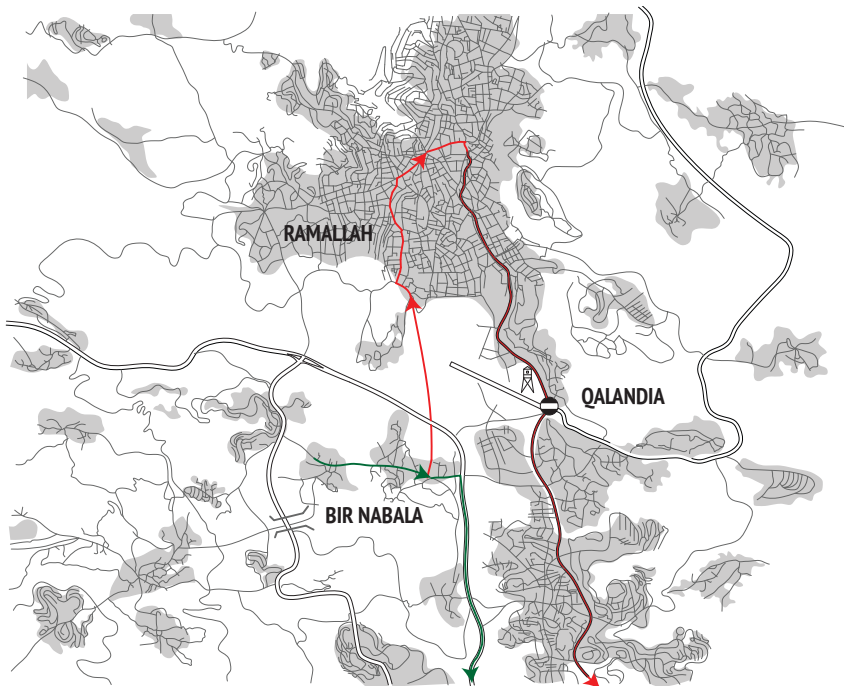
ISRAELI-ONLY BRIDGES AND
TUNNELS CONNECTING ISRAELI
SETTLEMENTS EAST OF THE
SEPARATION WALL.





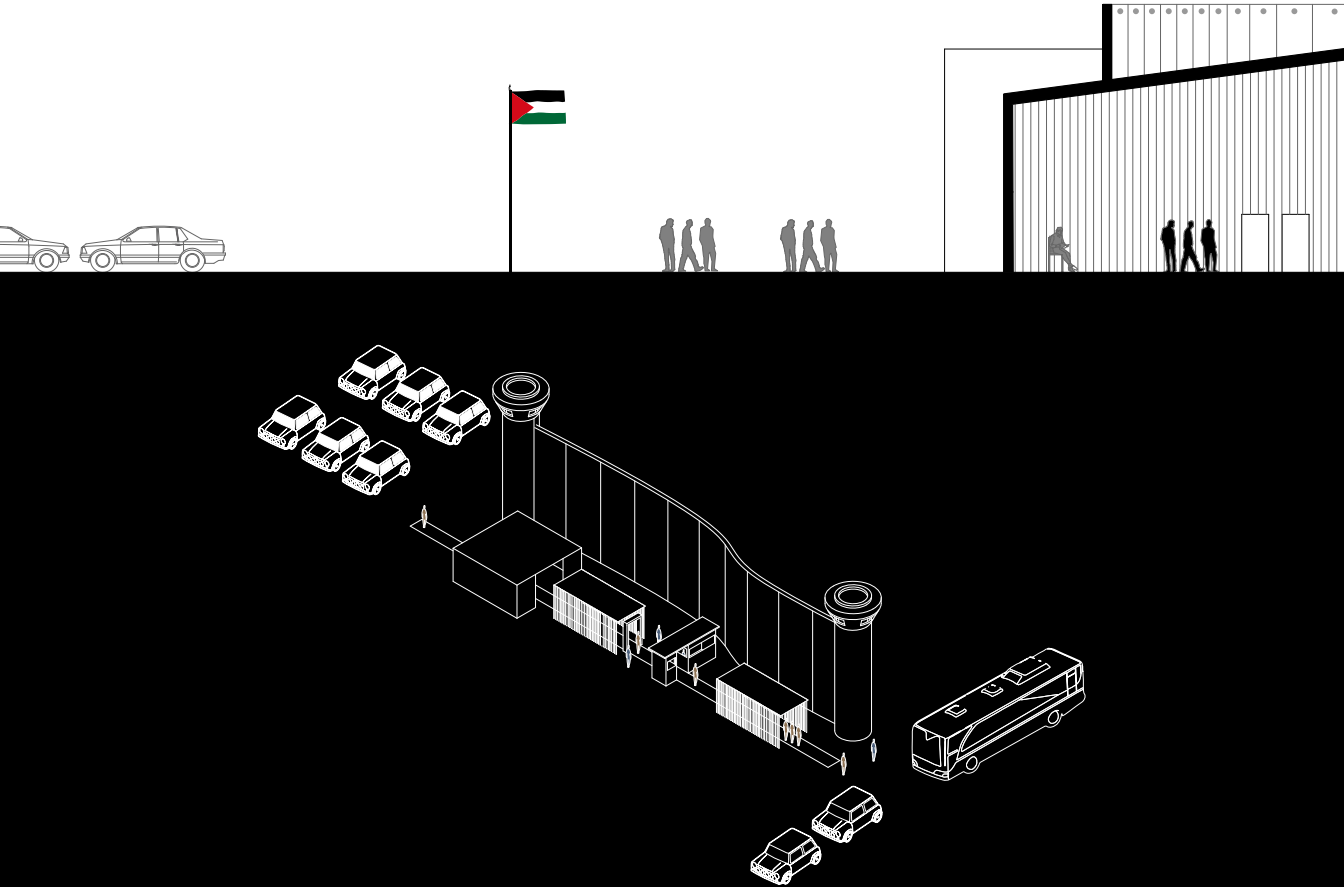


2. SA'IR TO HEBRON

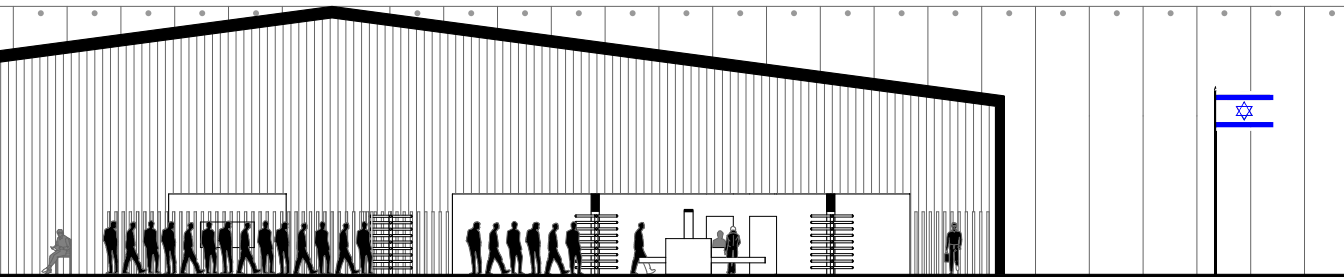


1. BIR NABALA TO JERUSALEM

PALESTINE



ISRAEL

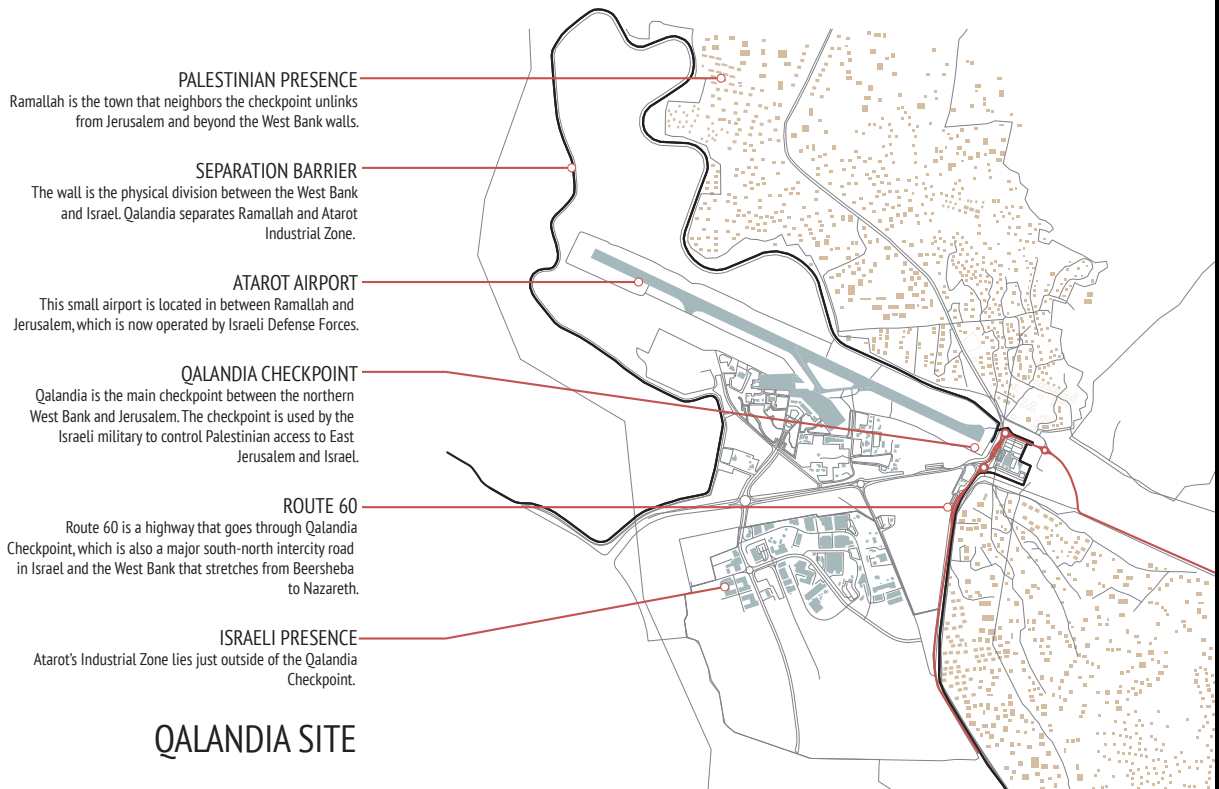


BORDER CHECKPOINT

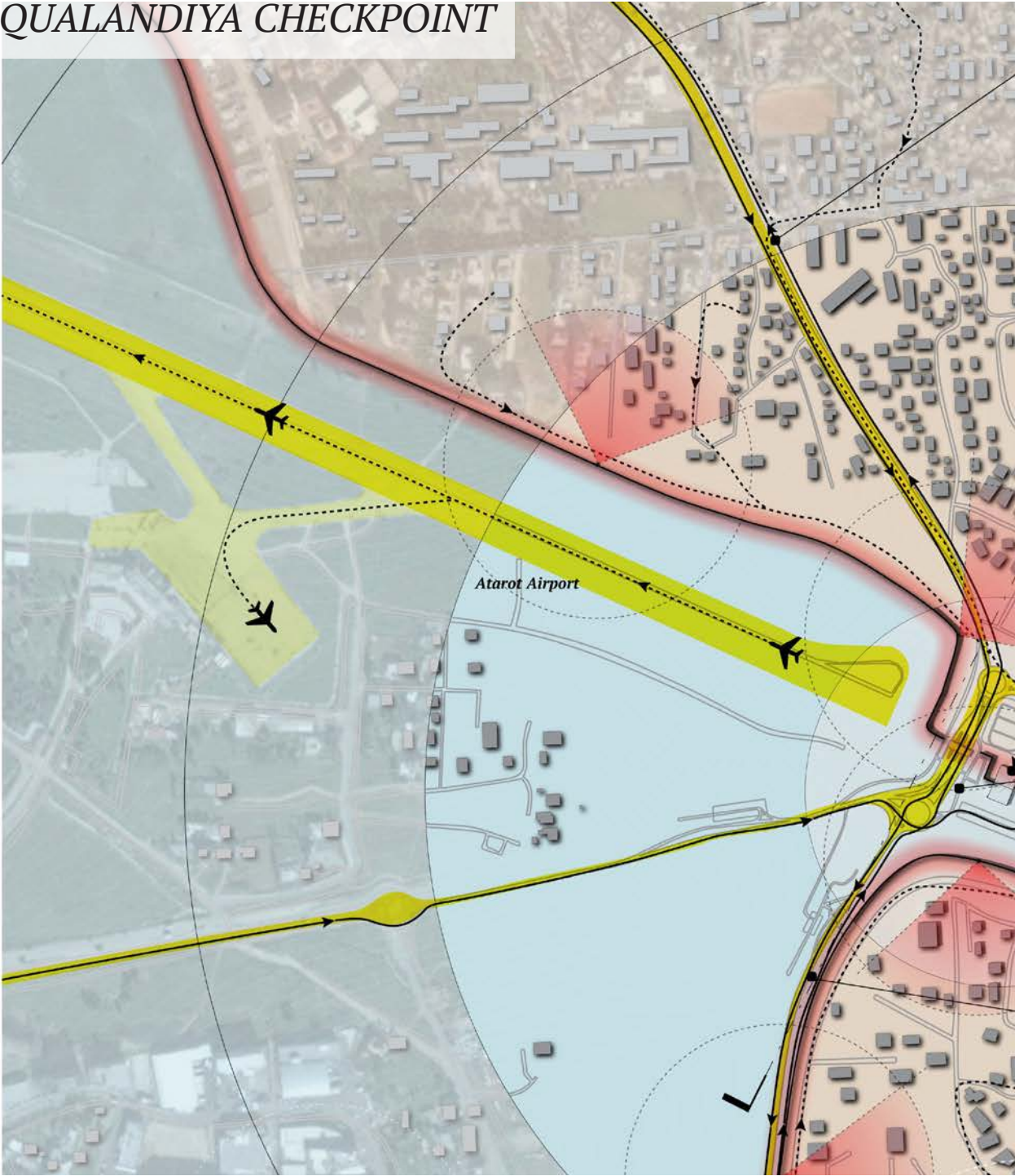
Checkpoints are located at the intersection of the Israeli border wall and major Palestinian roads. What is seemingly a reinforced shed, the checkpoint acts as a pedestrian filter into Israel. Although Israeli settlers can pass freely through the wall, the checkpoint forces Palestinian commuters to come to a complete stop twice a day. Only Palestinians with working permits can pass through, although it is still possible for any Palestinian worker to be rejected entry. The sequence of spaces through this threshold each individually act to surveil and secure the facility in case of an uprising. The spaces are divided by multiple metal turnstiles and 3 foot wide metal shoots. The transition through space weens the 15,000 people who cross every morning into four id check stations, one at a time.

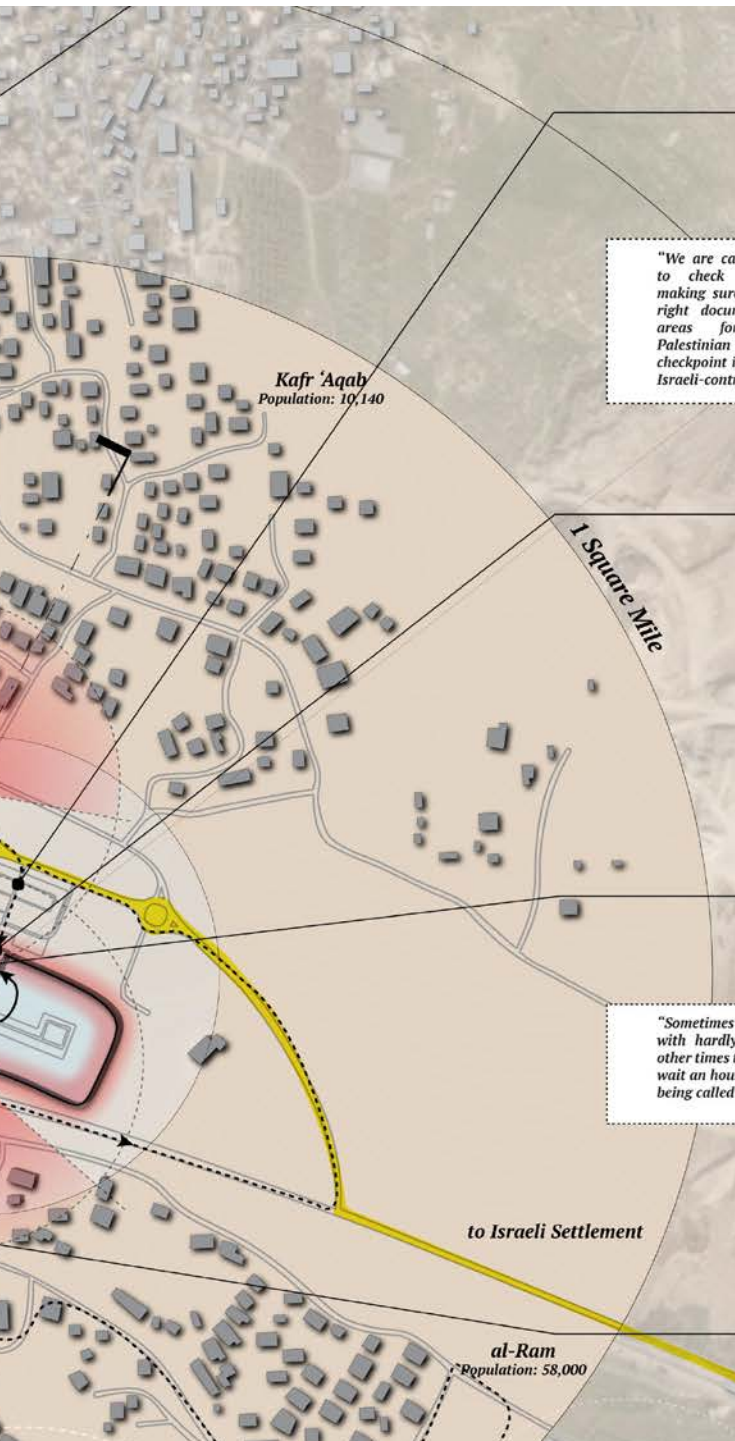
3

THE SITE



QUALANDIYA CHECKPOINT





"We are called one-by-one to check their papers, making sure they have the right documents to leave areas formally under Palestinian control if the checkpoint is en route to an Israeli-controlled area."

"Sometimes people pass with hardly any delay; at other times they may have to wait an hour or more before being called through."

7:05 am

Walking across the parking lot, there are interactions of people selling and buying goods. Sellers are offering coffee or tea to the people waiting in traffic to get checked.

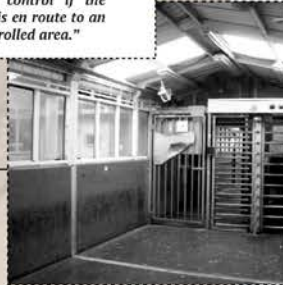


7:10 am

There is a massive crowd waiting in the shed. People are lined up through the shoots. There are others reading the paper on the benches conversing with one another. There are others standing in the corner praying.

7:12 am

Standing in the metal chutes, we are all sandwiched in. There is no turning back now. Bodies are lined up and waiting for any signs of movement. We wait until the doors turn so we can encounter the next line.



7:25 am

After hearing the buzzer, we stand in front of the second turnstile. We wait as the Israeli Defense Forces let three people at a time to go through security check.

7:40 am

I then go through the security check. I show my Palestinian ID and working papers through the glass to the Israeli officer on the other side. "Where are you going? What is your business in Jerusalem?"



7:50 am

I walk out through the third set of turnstiles - the exit doors. I wait for the next shuttle to Jerusalem.

8:00 am

I walk out through the third set of turnstiles - the exit doors. I wait for the next shuttle to Jerusalem.

7:15 pm

Standing at the bus stop in Jerusalem, crowds are gathered to make it back to the West Bank.



7:30 pm

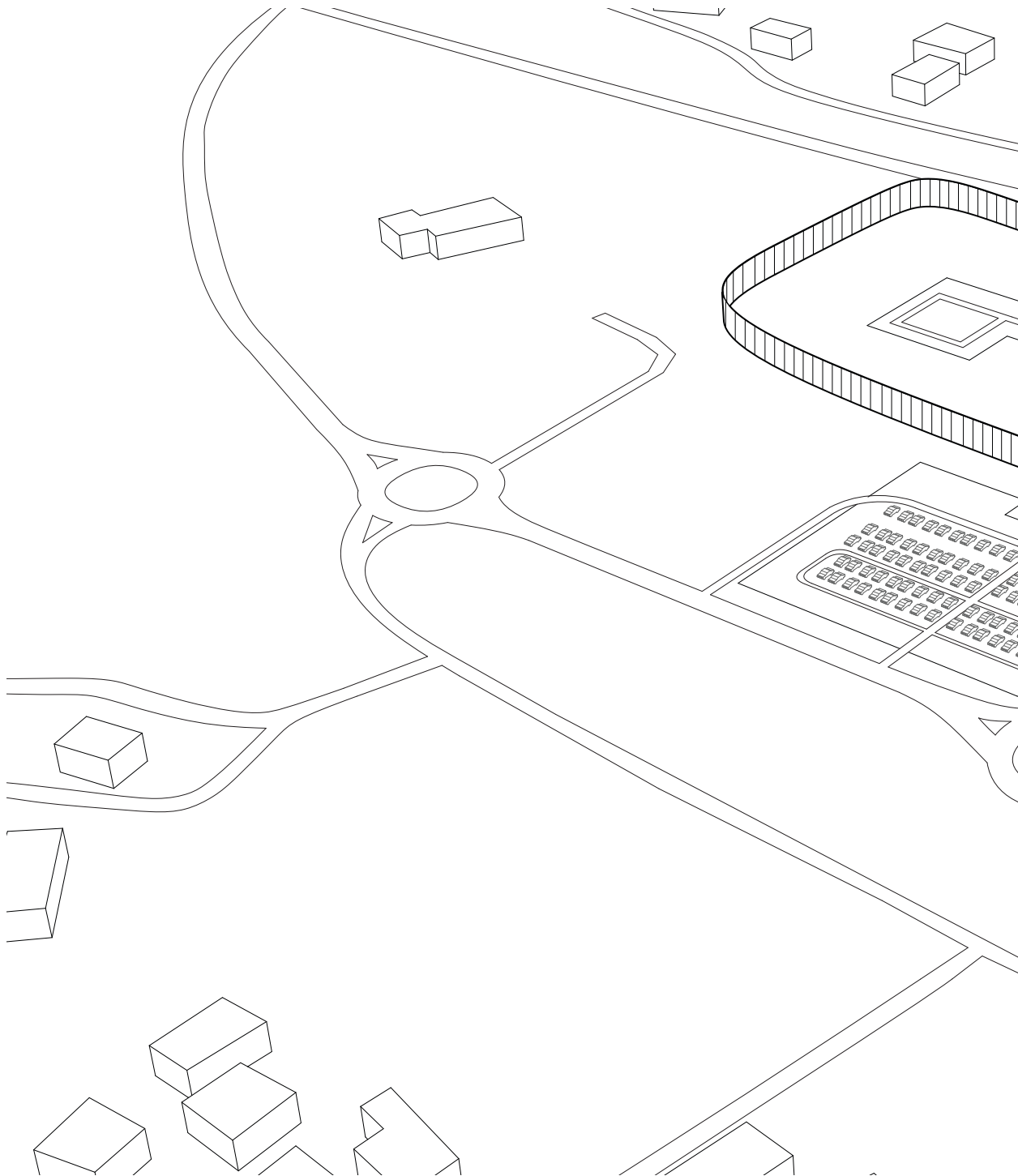
We are stuck in the traffic of the everyday routine of going home before we are moving at a faster speed. The wall meets Route 60 as we continue to move north, parallel to us.

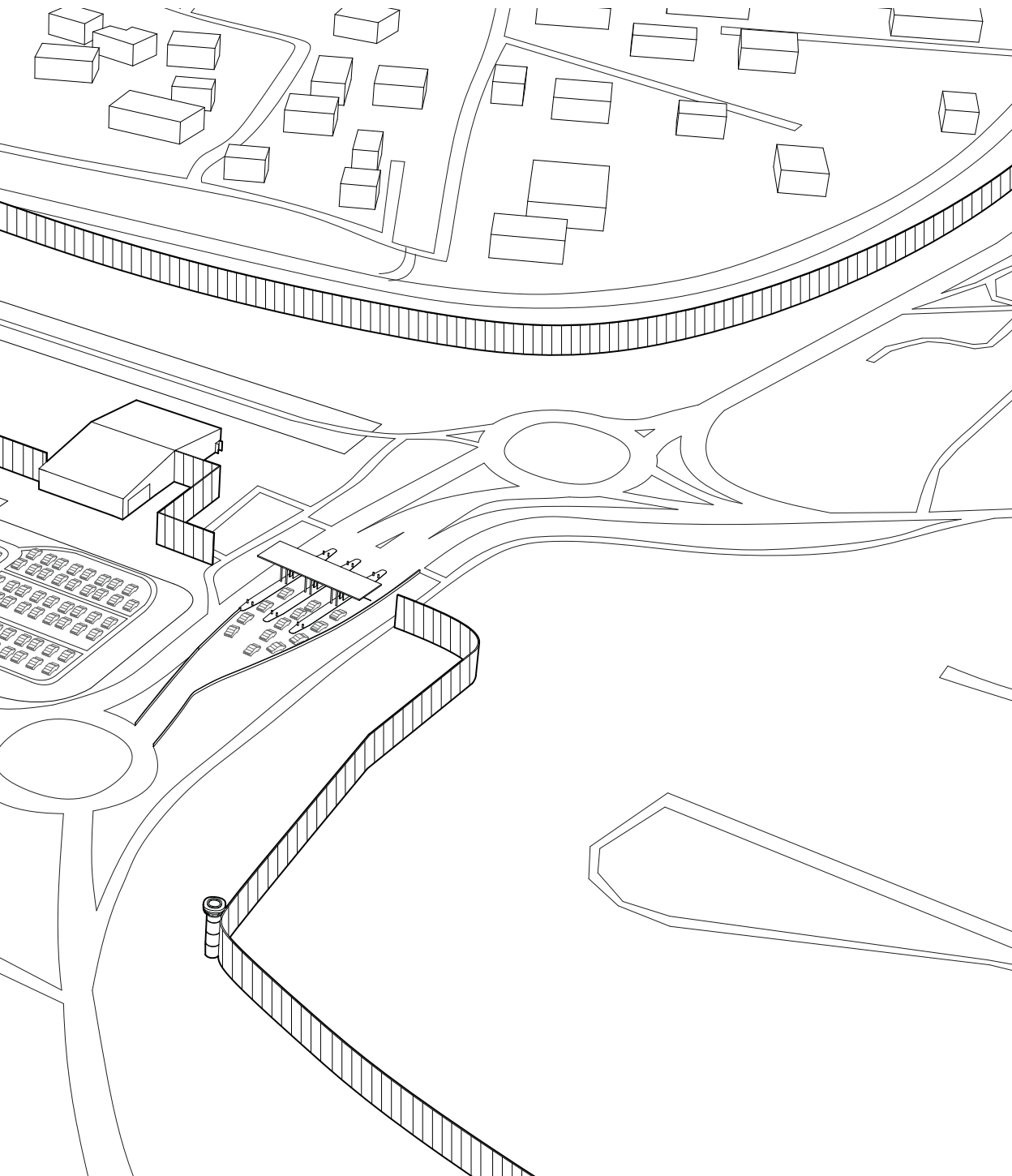


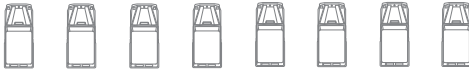


Section looking South East

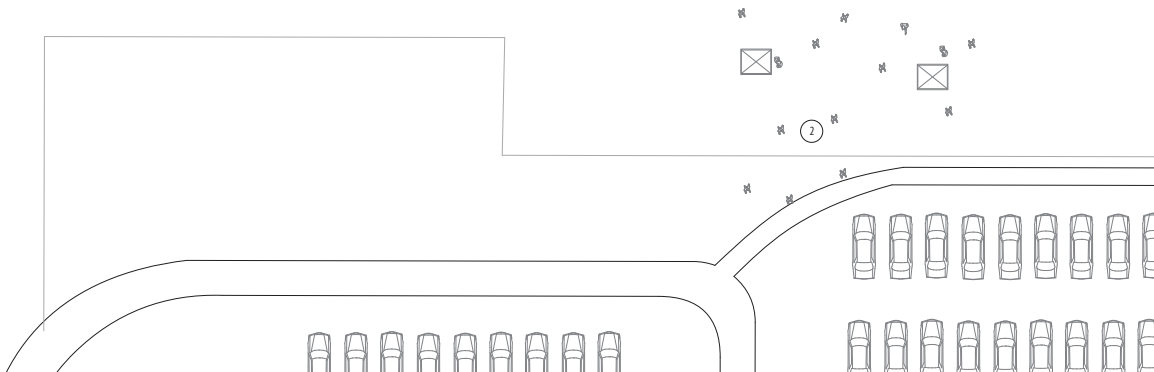
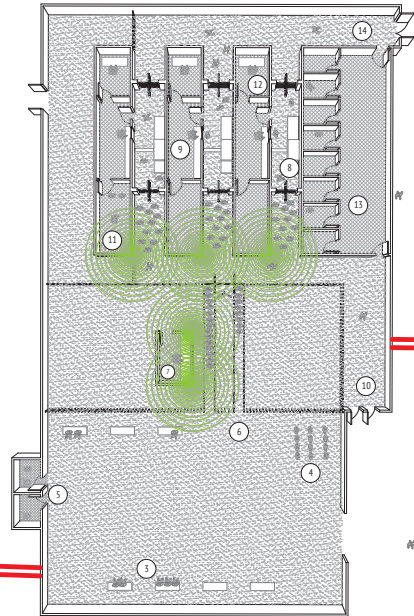


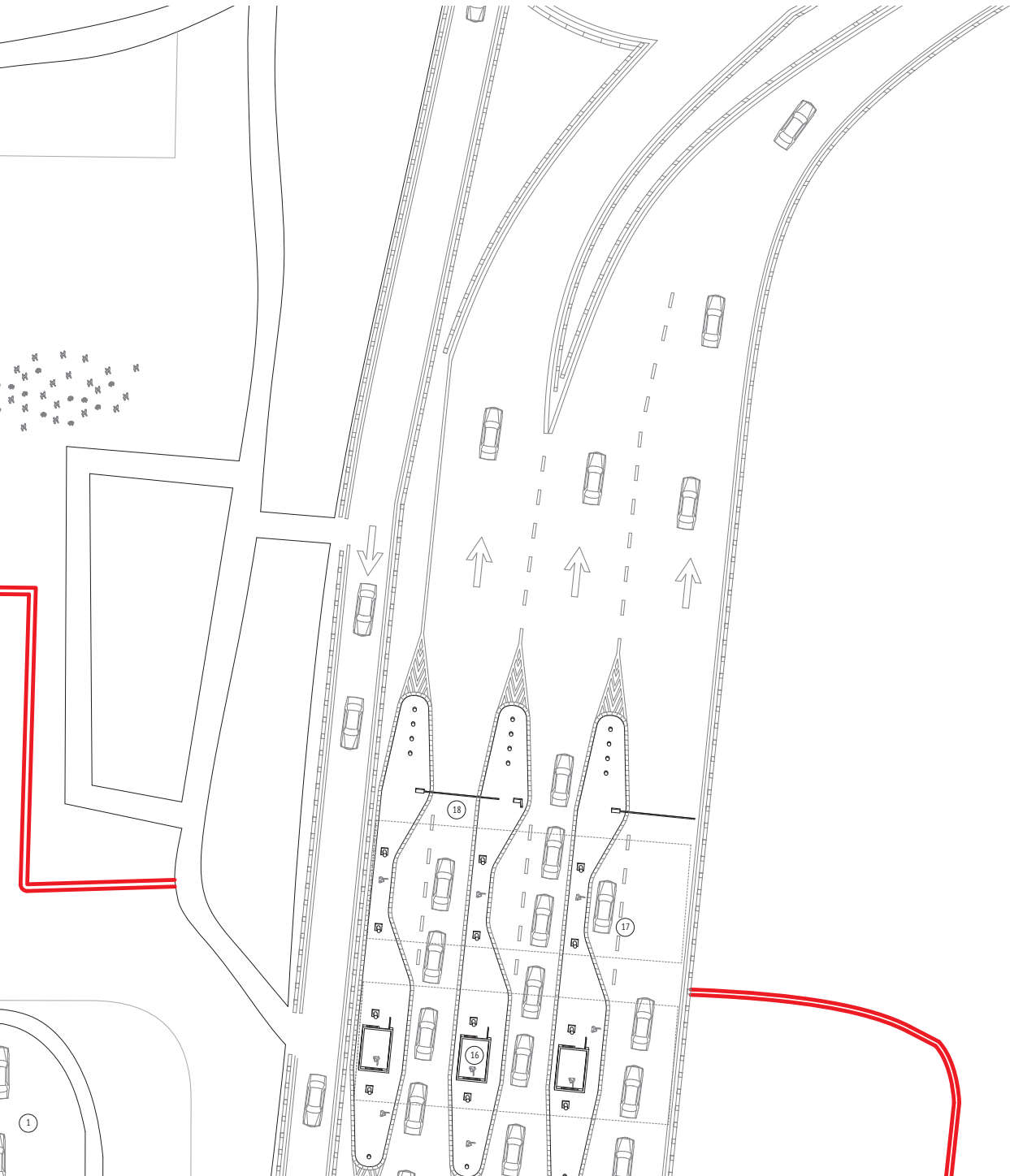






- ① PARKING LOT
- ② MARKET PLACE
- ③ WAITING AREA
- ④ PRAYER
- ⑤ BATHROOM
- ⑥ METAL CHUTES WAITING LINES
- ⑦ SURVEILLANCE
- ⑧ SECURITY AND BAG CHECK
- ⑨ ID CHECK
- ⑩ DENIED ACCESS
- ⑪ INTERROGATION ROOM
- ⑫ MONITOR ROOM
- ⑬ HOLDING CELL
- ⑭ EXIT
- ⑮ BUS STOP TO JERUSALEM
- ⑯ BOOTH
- ⑰ STOP AND CAR SEARCH
- ⑱ CAR GATE

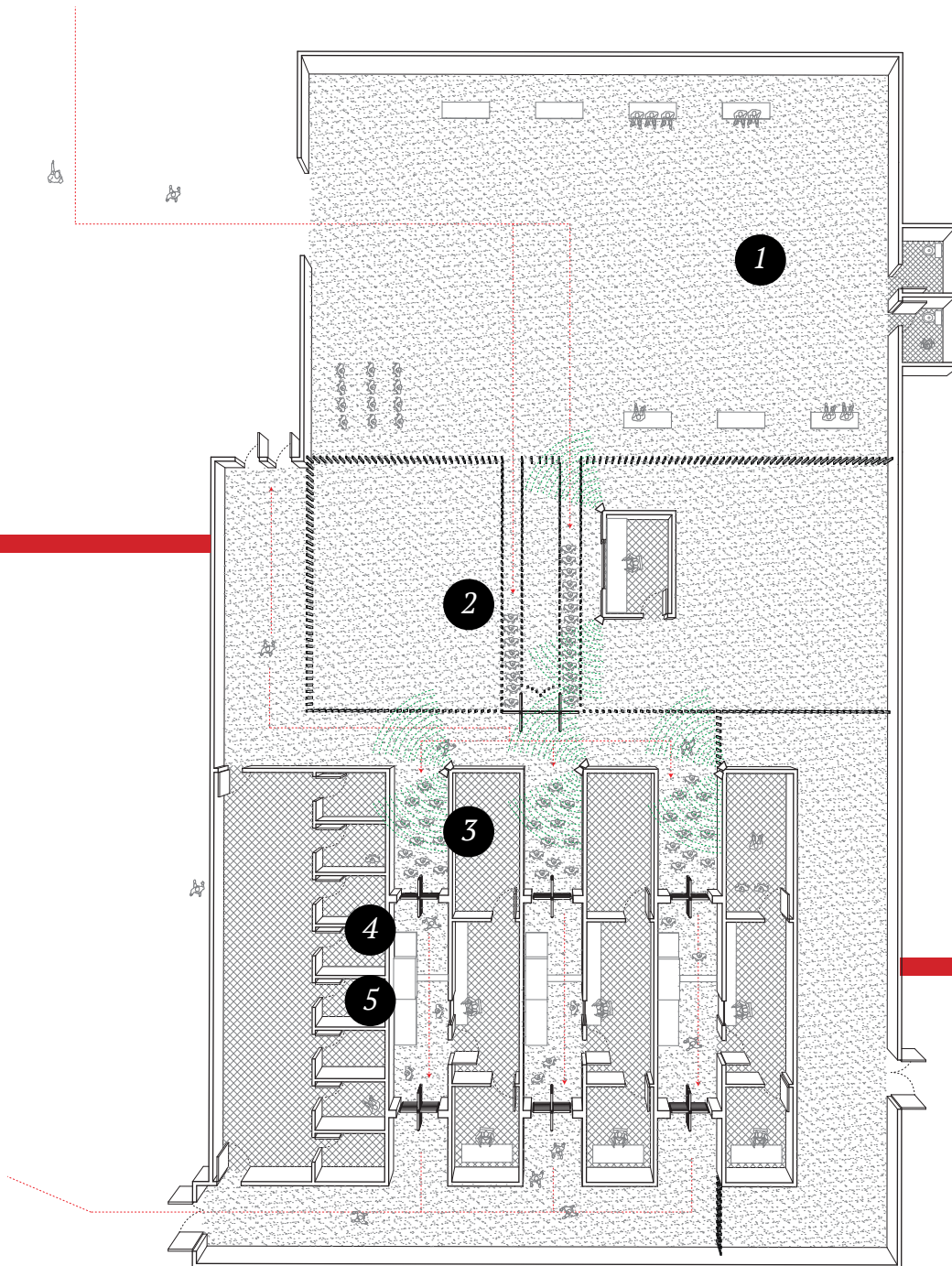




4

PROGRAM







1. Waiting Room



2. The Line



3. Body Scan



4. Bag Check



5. ID Check

5

PRECEDENT

“Once an initial political consensus is reached (and there is rarely any point in talking about connection before at least a minimal consensus is reached) then the buffer zone along the partition lines becomes the area or zone with the most potential for connections.”

- Dr. Esther Charlesworth

BERLIN WALL

LOCATION: Berlin, Germany

LIFESPAN OF DIVISION: 1961-1989

PLAYERS: Soviet Union, United States,
Great Britain, and France

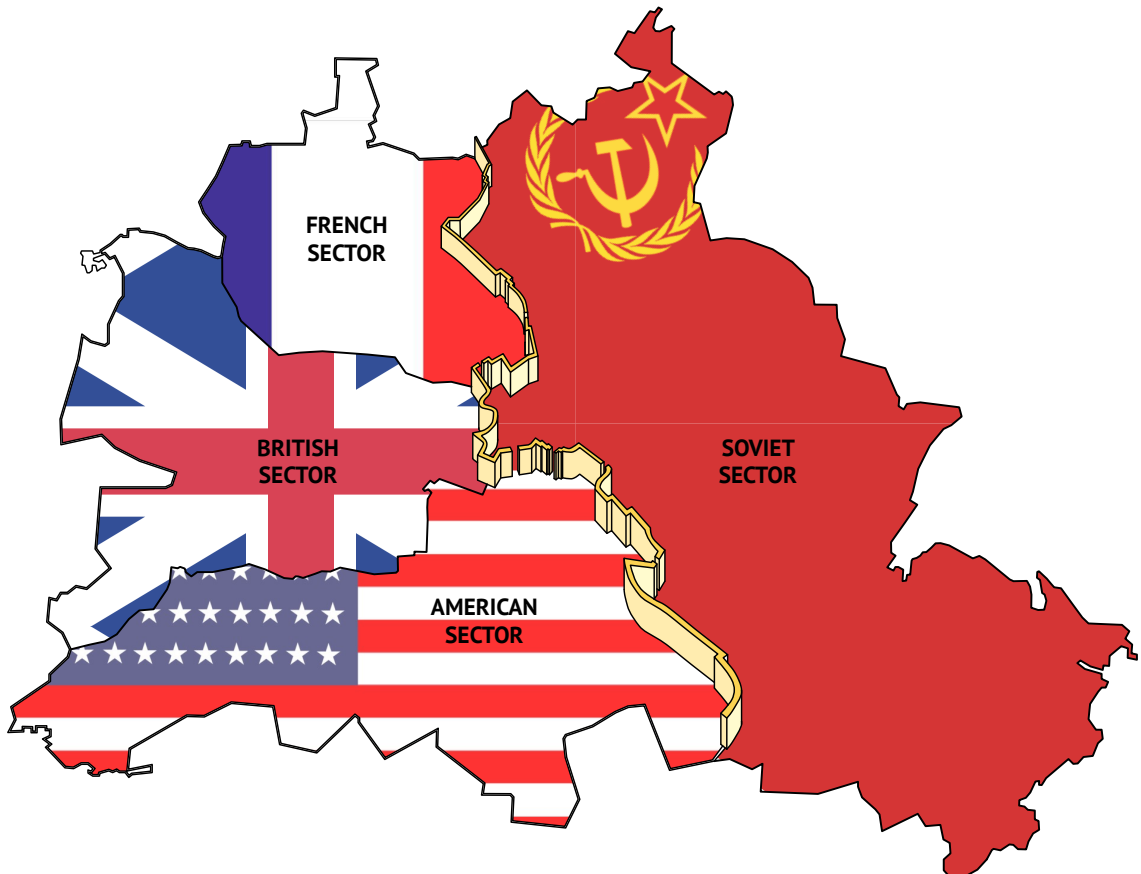
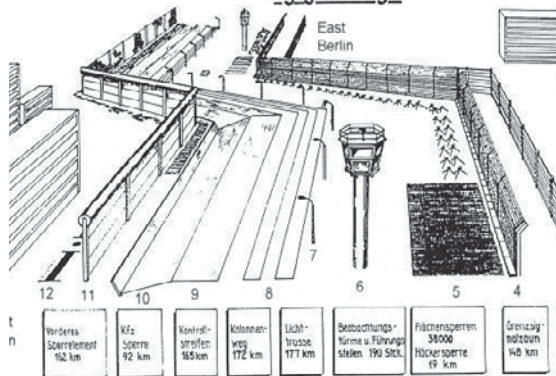
SIZE: 106 km long

The Berlin Wall (1961-1989) as a piece of architectural division was bounded by a seemingly never ending conflict between the Democratic national powers and the Communist party established in the Soviet Union. In retrospect, this historical era in which a city became literally divided through the use of a monolithic enclosure system can be viewed as one of the most prolific architectural experiments of our modern civilization. East Berlin was placed on full lockdown on the night of August 12, 1961 when its walls were completed and its gates were mostly closed. The beginning of the Cold War represented a clash of two highly differentiated political movements. West Berliners thrived with easy access to aid, resources, and a global economy while all trade and communication came to a halt within the walls of East Berlin.

- **August 12, 1961**
Construction of preliminary wall
- **August 26, 1961**
All crossing points are closed for West Berlin citizens
- **December 17, 1963**
West Berliner citizen may visit East Berlin the first time after more than two years
- **September 3, 1971**
Four Power's Agreement over Berlin visiting becomes easier for West Berliners
- **Jun 12, 1987**
President Ronald Reagan visits Berlin and urges Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to tear down the Berlin Wall.
- **November 9, 1989**
Berlin Wall is opened



nier- und signaltechnischer Ausbau der Staatsgrenze zu BR (gegenwärtig)



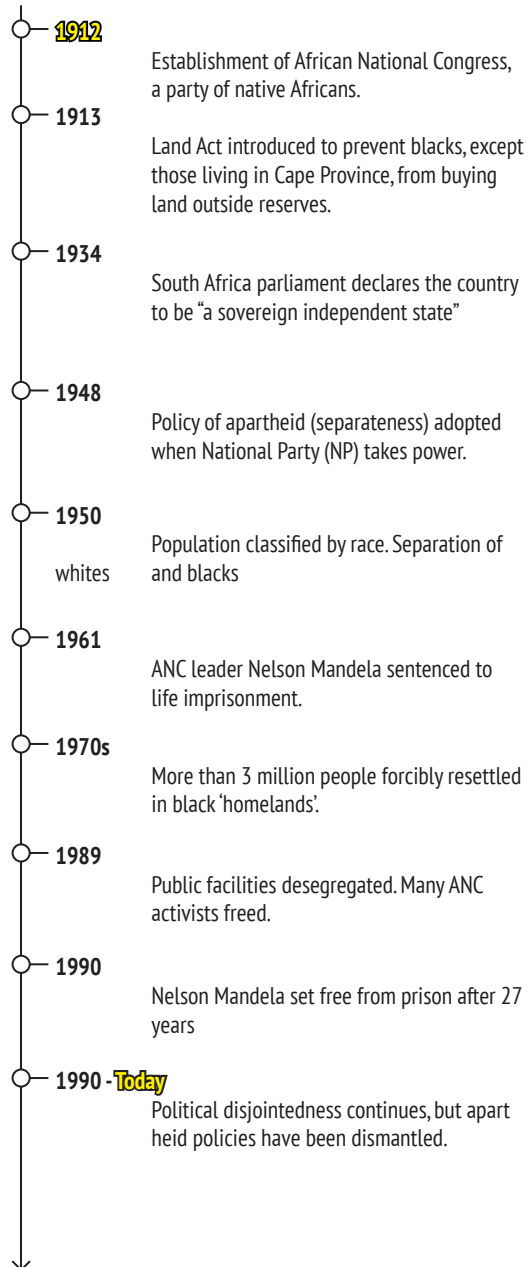
SOUTH AFRICAN RACIAL APARTHEID

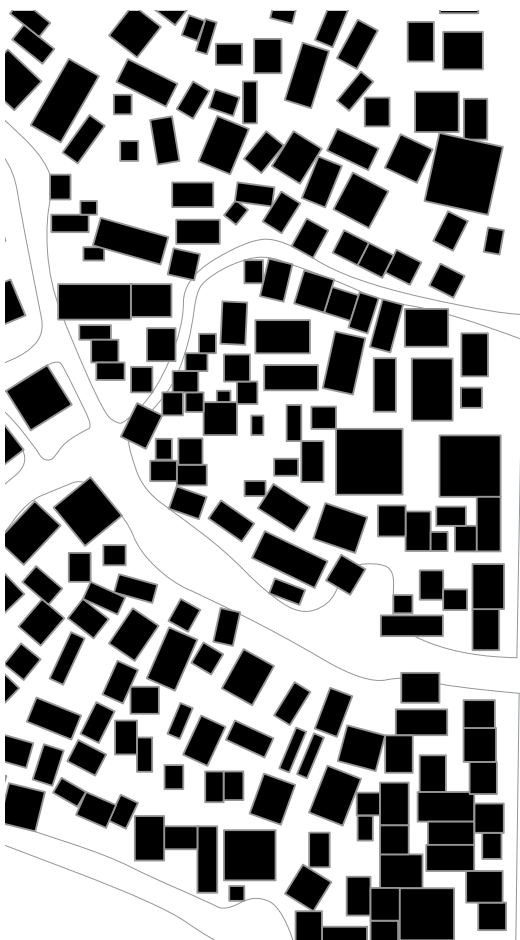
LOCATION: Cities within South Africa

LIFESPAN OF DIVISION: 1961-1989

PLAYERS: National Party (White South Africans) & African National Congress (Black South Africans)

The settlement and colonization of South Africa goes back to the early exploration era when Portuguese navigator Bartholomeu Dias landed on the southern tip of Africa. Since nearly the 1400s, Africans have been living under an oppressed society that treats their native people as second-class citizens. It was not until 1948 when the National Party (NP) took control of South Africa where laws were put into place to create a policy of the separation of races, also known as apartheid. Nearly 40 years later in 1989, Nelson Mandela, the leader of the equal society party was released from prison and public spaces were desegregated. To this day many regions of South Africa are struggling to create equilibrium within their cities and segregation remains widespread. In many cases though, the plighted black South African neighborhoods are adjacent to their white counterparts with drastically superior living conditions. In instances of adjacency, white villages form informal barriers to prevent racial integration. The barrier often manifests itself as a dense urban block with few openings, a busy highway, or steep topography.





8 MILE WALL, DETROIT

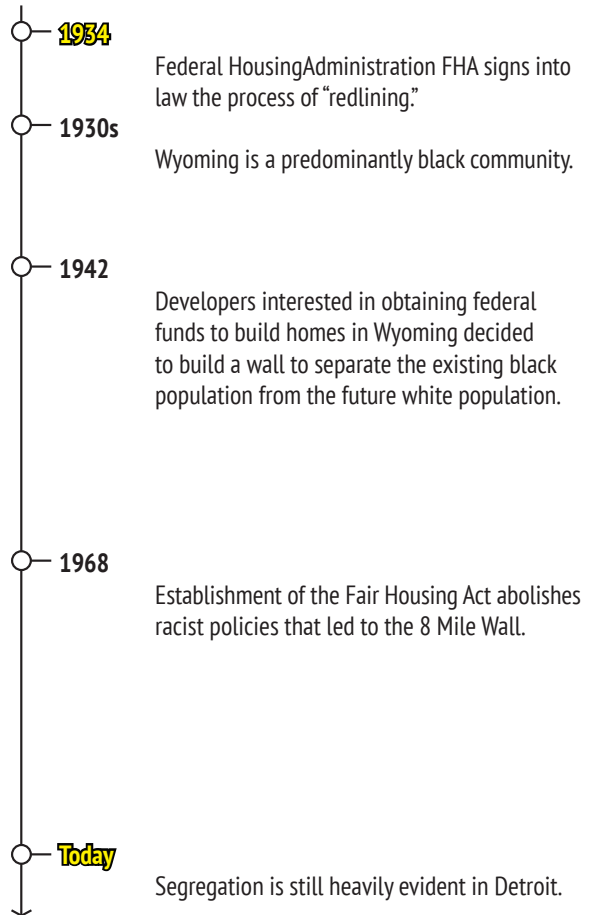
LOCATION: Detroit, Michigan

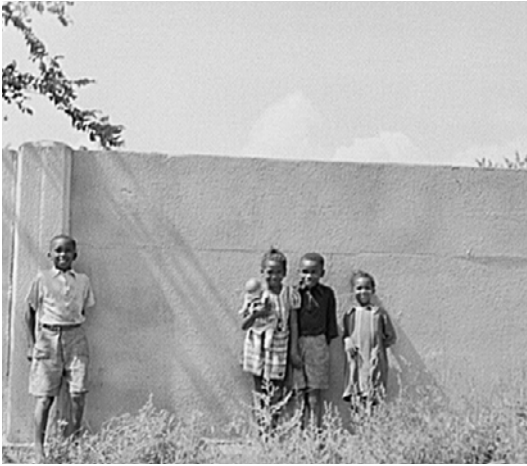
LIFESPAN OF WALL: 1961-1989

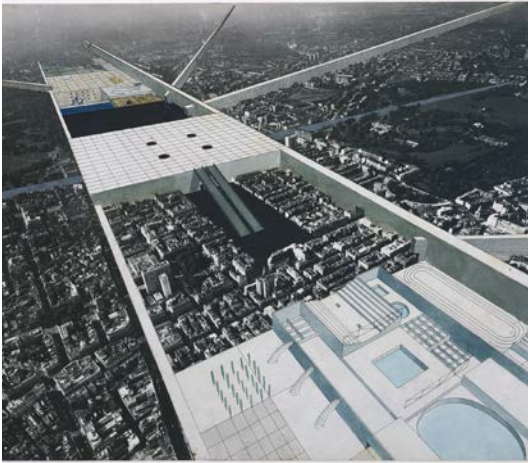
PLAYERS: FHA (Federal Housing Administration) & population of Detroit

SIZE: 3 city blocks

During the Roosevelt administration, as a method of recovery for many working class families who had been defaulting on their mortgage loans following the Great Depression, a division of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) focused on creating maps to understand neighborhood market values. Using this data, the FHA would declare neighborhoods or entire towns to be either a valued interest or not worthy of an investment based on their overall value. What may have started as public policy intended to help the housing market quickly evolved into an almost exact method of dividing people of different classes, in most cases people of different races. Standing at a mere six feet tall, a wall was built to define an edge in which one side was viewed by the American government as a higher value neighborhood than the other. What followed this time was one of the most contentious periods of race relations in the United States.







ARCHIVING

SPECULATIVE BORDER CONDITIONS

What worked? What did not work? How can these examples offer insight?

The “wall”, whether it is intended to simply declare a boundary or contain an area, produces a series of consequences for the cities and people it bounds. More often than not, these border walls come to represent an intervention that divides one from another, the ‘good’ from the ‘bad’. Another common characteristic to these barriers is that they are rarely created out of mutual respect, but usually by a “more supreme power” with the resources and capabilities to build it.

When observing the conditions of the Palestinian people under the Israeli occupation, it is evident that the concept of the barrier wall has been calculated and engineered into a much more monumental and quite often animated element of the land. The borders surrounding the West Bank are like amoebic edges that push and pull using their arms to wedge themselves further into Palestinian land. This modern-day colonization is founded in a militaristic fashion especially during times of war or unrest when the border wall tightens through a series of security measures. The gates into Jerusalem for work and prayer, shut. The roads separating Palestinian families, blocked. **This security edge becomes a callous to the land and to the people it surrounds.**

The disjointed condition the barrier creates, with its various behaviors and components, has been repeated and multiplied over the past several decades to become a major global conflict. Seeing as this architectural solution whether it intends to or not, instigates more conflict than it sets to diffuse; then this architecture must evolve to soothe the conflicts it has created. These projects go about exploring through speculation **how architecture can offer new connections to divided lands**. In some cases these investigations propose grand & impossible structures to propel the conflict into a utopic or dystopic context, while others propose careful negotiations for smaller scales of interaction. It is important for each of these investigations to be filtered for possible questions, answers, successes and failures in order for a new scheme to develop.

EXODUS, OR THE VOLUNTARY PRISONERS OF ARCHITECTURE

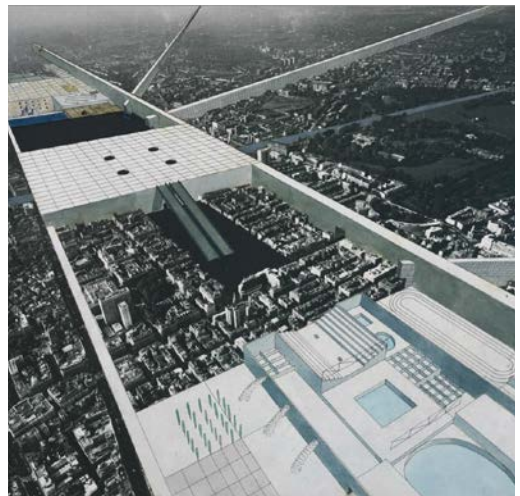
Rem Koolhaas, Madelon Vreisendorp, Elia Zenghelis, and Zoe Zenghelis (1972)

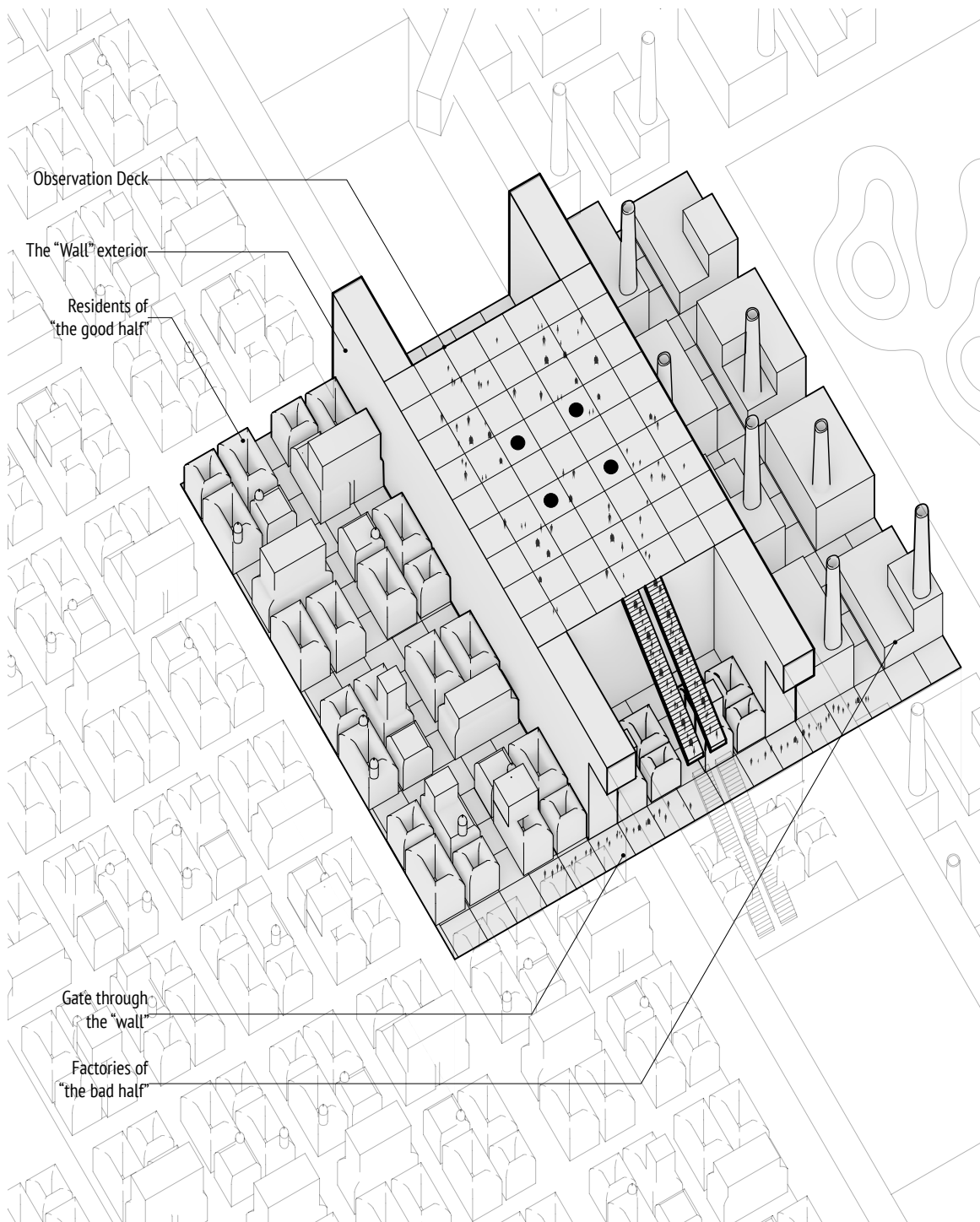
Through a narrative that grounds itself in a critique of the Modern lifestyle and its social divisions, “Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture” offers insight into a re-envisioned city as an architectural division. The project’s success lies not in its pragmatism, but it’s questioning of the purposefulness to the “wall”, in this case referencing the Berlin wall. “Division, isolation, inequality, aggression, destruction, all the negative aspects of the Wall, could be the ingredients of a new phenomenon: architectural warfare against undesirable conditions” (Koolhaas). By injecting the politically charged form from Berlin into the heart of London, Rem Koolhaas proposes an urbanism based solely on the monumentality of the wall itself. A paradise like no other is created to soothe an already existing influx of refugees fleeing the quandary of industrialization and class division. The wall as a symbol had now been switched to better fit its disparaged people.

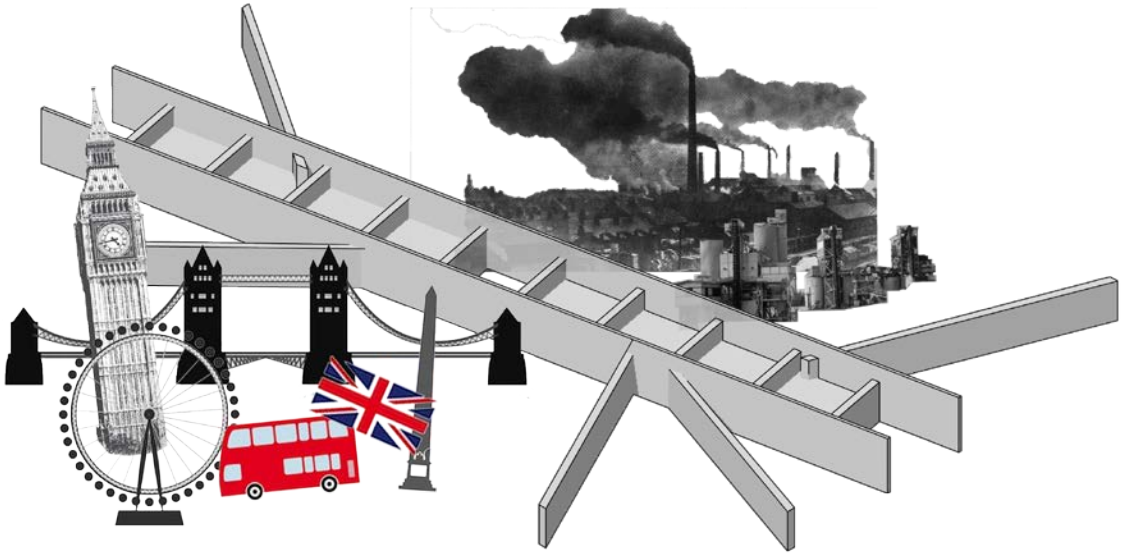
“This new architecture is neither authoritarian nor hysterical: it is the hedonistic science of designing collective facilities that fully accommodate individual desires. From the outside this architecture is a sequence of serene monuments; the life inside produces a continuous state of ornamental frenzy and decorative delirium, an overdose of symbols.”

-Rem Koolhaas

What became a symbol in West Germany for imprisonment had transformed into a redefined architectural imprisonment in which all its prisoners are voluntarily living there.







Politics

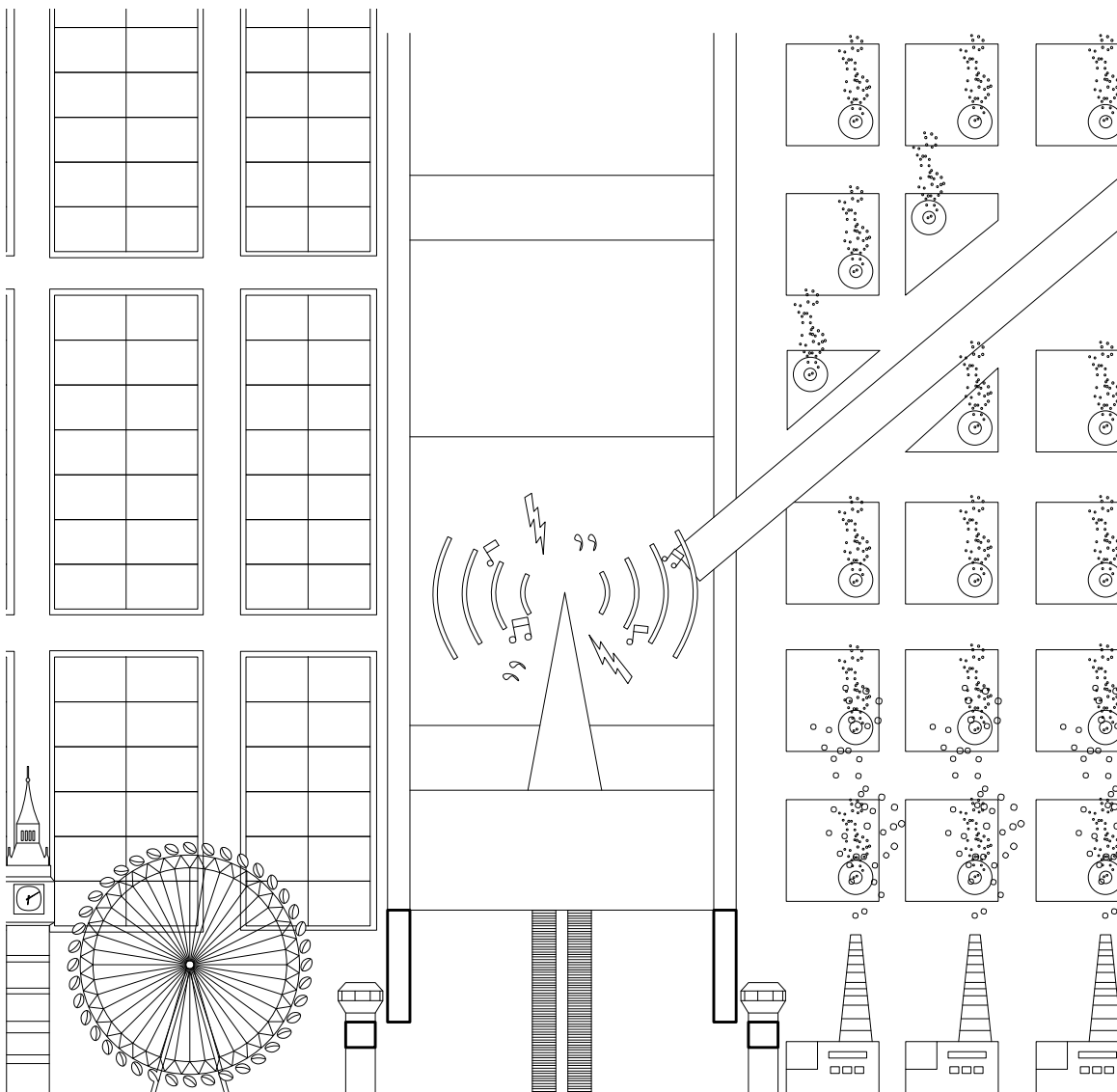
This wall represents modernism's role as an answer to the architectural divisions in a conflicted city.

The Site

This project acts as a new barrier embedded in the existing fabric of London.

How did they make a wall?

The wall in this case is a physical wall structure which surrounds a new modernist community in which the program creates splendid lives.



Program

Reception Area, Central Area, Ceremonial Square, Tip of the Strip, The Park of the Four Elements, Square of the Arts, Baths, Institute of Biological Transactions, Park of Aggression, The Allotments.

Materiality

The wall is a collage of modernist symbols.

THE CARAVAN PALACE COMMON GROUNDS IN MITROVICA

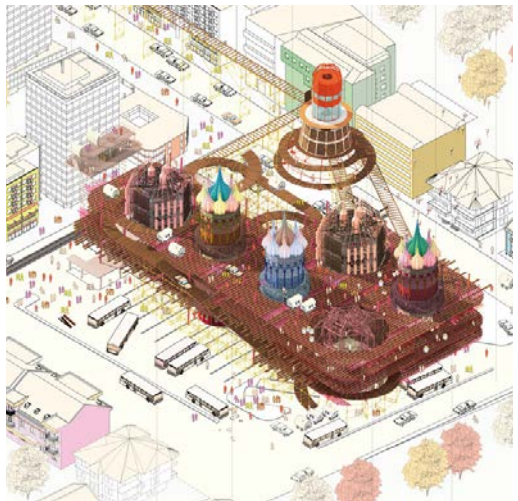
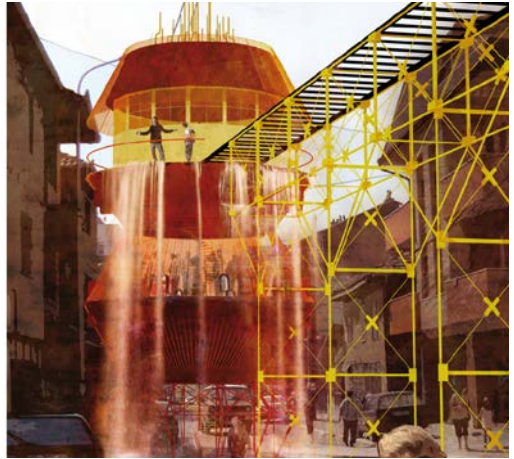
Maud Sanciaume (2013)

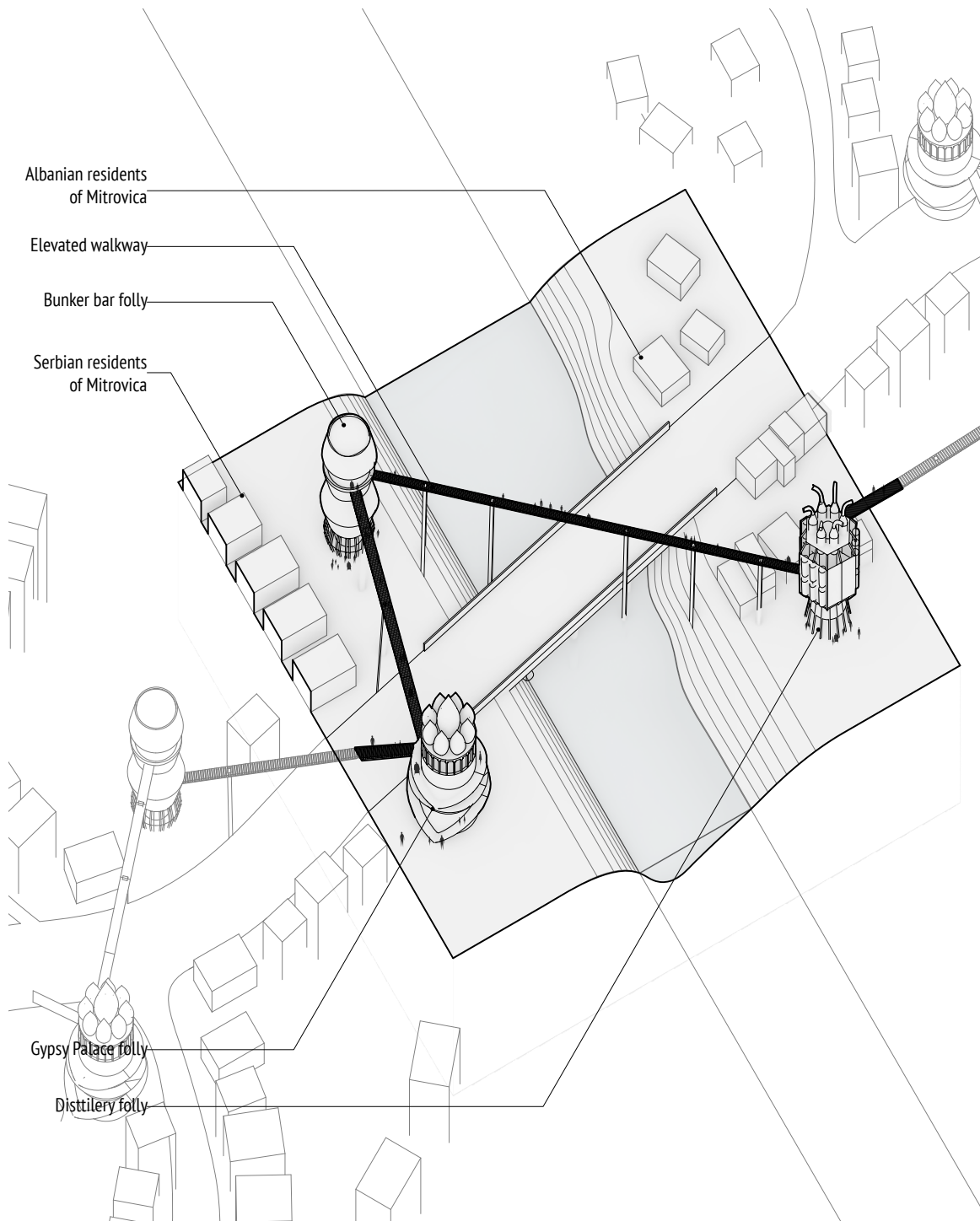
Divided by the Ibar river, Mitrovica is a city made up of majority Albanians with a large Serbian population living on the opposing side of the Ibar. Following the Kosovo War in 1999, the city was left in a cultural split, with violent extremists on both sides. This project sets out to soothe the division in Mitrovica by creating a series of alternative public spaces that catalyze dialogue between Albanians and Serbians. The program and use for each space is mainly influenced by the Balkan spirits production, by Kosovo's festive cultural background, and the steam industrial revolution. By choosing program based on the similarities between both populations, the project is responding to the cultural context

“Successful public spaces are spaces that serve the local communities. Spaces that are innovative, that have a capacity to grow and to absorb culture. They are key points to the regeneration of an urban fabric. Those public spaces are not anymore independent entities with clear delimitation in the urban fabrics. The frontiers between public and private as well as between the collective and the individual are disintegrating, creating an ambiguous and porous multi-functional system.”

-Maud Sanciaume

Speculating a peaceful environment within a context of historically violent populations is wishful thinking. In order to address this issue of violence, the “boxing parliament” space is designed to absorb some of the aggression felt by particular individuals. The bar and club space also finds itself between both cultures. Creating opportunities for multiple layers of interaction, the common ground caravans create a new dimension of architectural space within the city of Mitrovica.







Politics

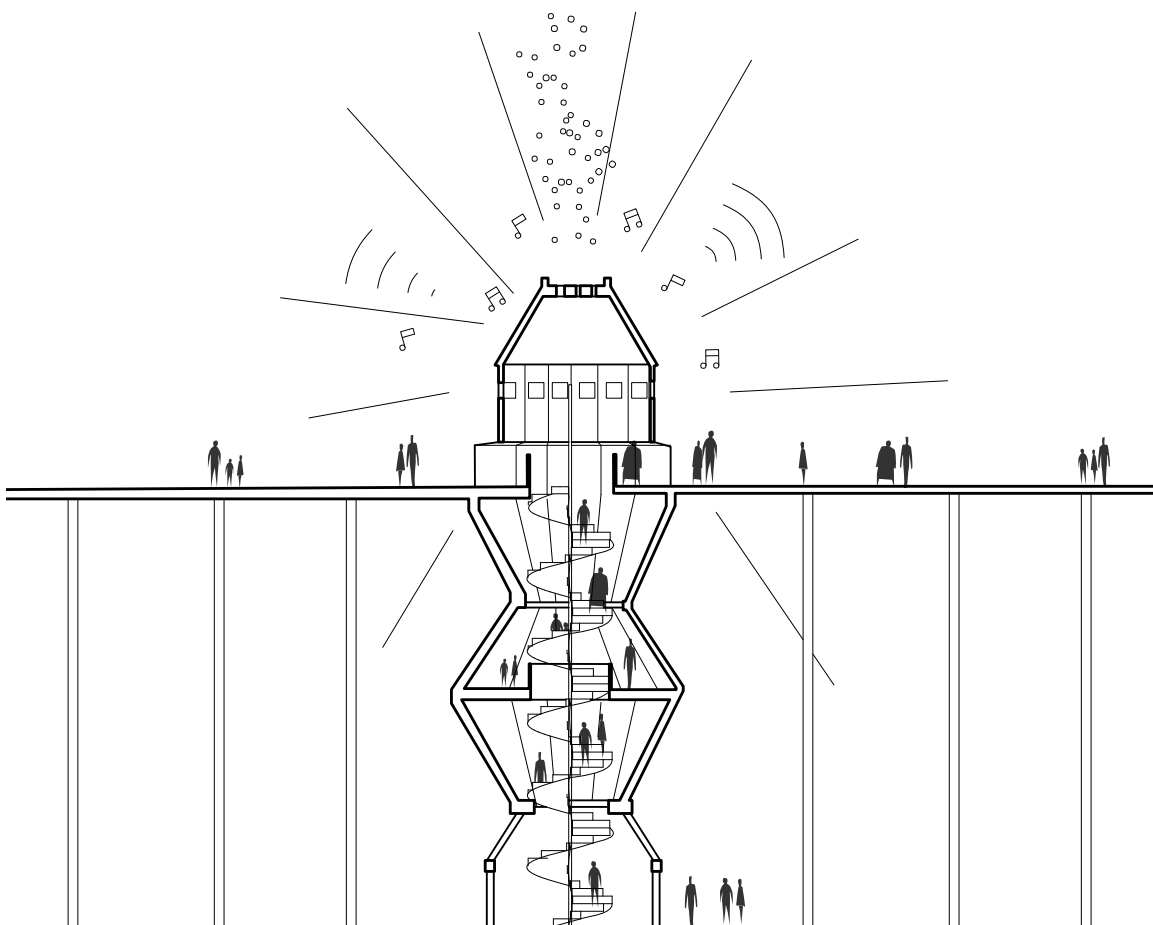
The population of Mitrovica is split between Albanians and Serbians who live in segregated neighborhoods on opposite sides of the Ibar River.

The Site

Sprinkled along a major highway which crosses the city of Mitrovica, these nodal public spaces connect themselves to the existing city fabric by floating above it.

How did they make a wall?

Through a series of individually programmed nodes connected by a network of elevated paths, this project stitches together a divided city.



Program

Each node varies in program, but each relate to the cultural traditions shared by both sides. The series of public spaces manifest themselves as a boxing ring, a distillery, a bar/club, large event spaces, and a mobile concert hall.

Materiality

The boardwalk system seems to use wood and steel while the individual follies are made of mostly steel and glass.

OASIS OF PEACE

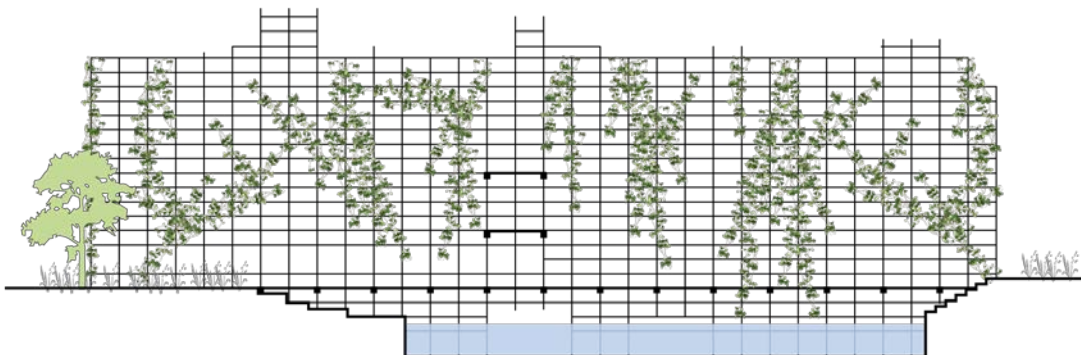
Lauren Fresle (2015)

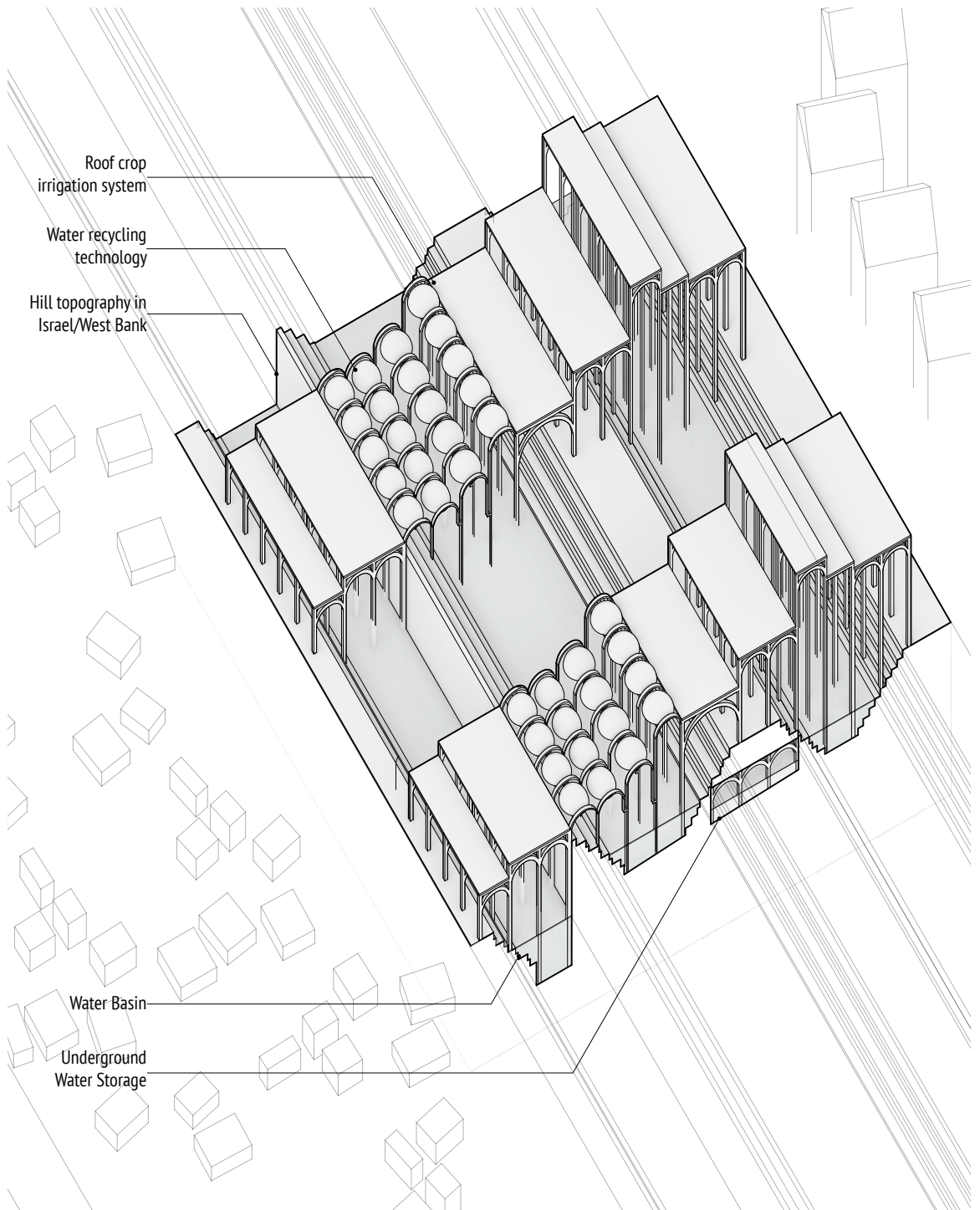
“Oasis of Peace” is a fantasy water city. This conceptual Israeli city promotes peace through water management, where Jewish and Muslim communities live together amongst cisterns and wells. Fresle reimagined a model city for peace, sustainable agriculture and water resource management. This addressed the water crisis that is happening in the Middle East, for water is valuable and scarce.

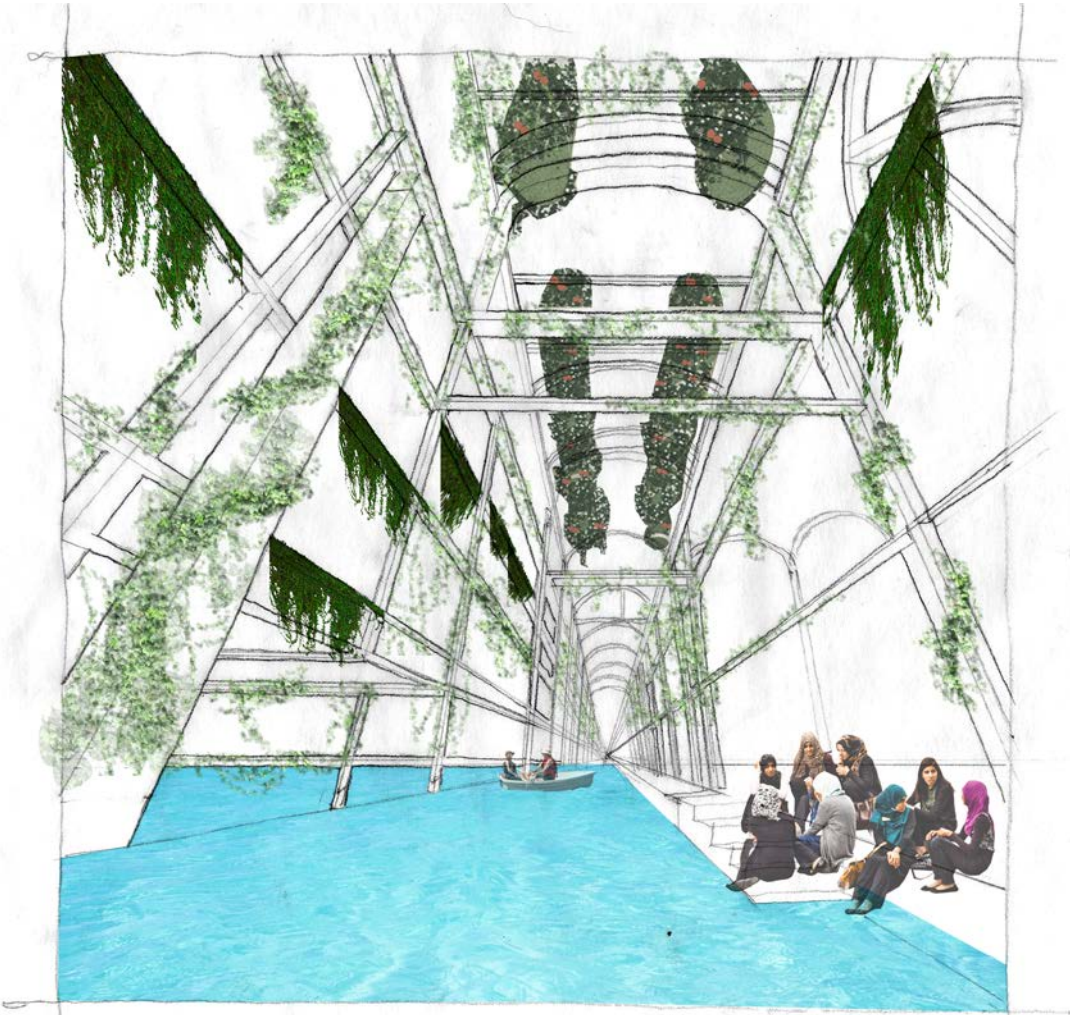
“As water is key to the environment and our survival, there is a risk that political conflicts in areas with limited water resources will be critical. Many predict that there will be an issue of serious dispute over water resources between Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Jordan.”

-Lauren Fresle

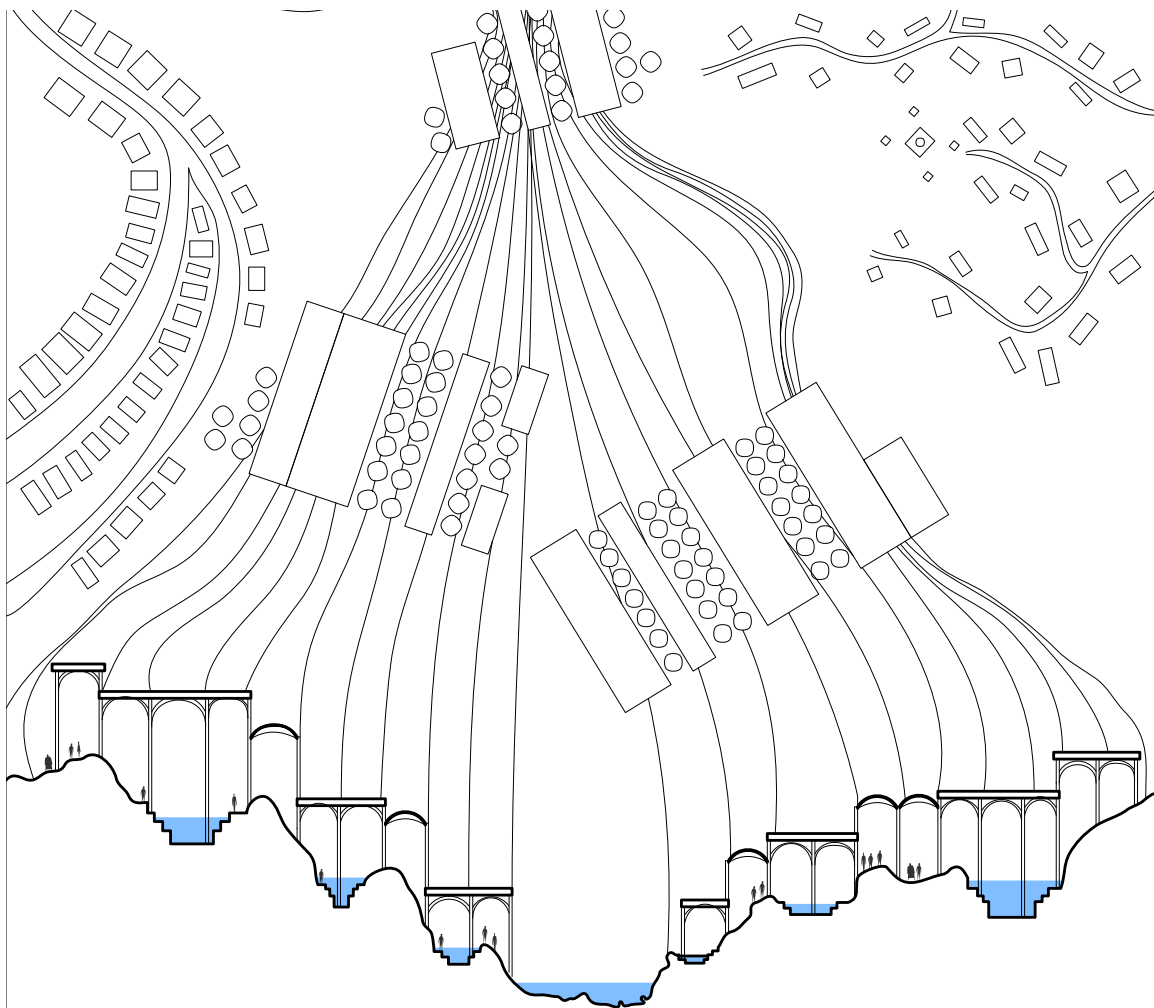
The project named Oasis of Peace after an already existing community of around 200 Jewish Israeli and Palestinian Arab Israeli citizens living together between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Fresle imagines the city as a bicultural and bilingual city that invites communities from all countries, local and global, to learn how to harvest rainwater and fog vapor without impacting on natural resources such as mountain aquifers and lakes. The shared need for water would help overcome political and religious differences.







- Politics** Providing peace by providing water to a desert land. Through the cultivation of land, an Arab-Israeli community can co-exist.
- The Site** The project replaces an existing Israeli community located within the seam zone between Israel and the West Bank.
- How did they make a wall?** This project's site, within the seam zone, allows for connections between both sides. The wall in this case is manifested as a series of water harvesting farms, water storage facilities, and vertical/ traditional agricultural areas.



Program The experience and work assoicated with the harvesting of water through the combination of the natural tendencies of water and several advanced technological harvesting systems.

Materiality The Oasis of Peace relies heavily on wood construction and water proofing materials.

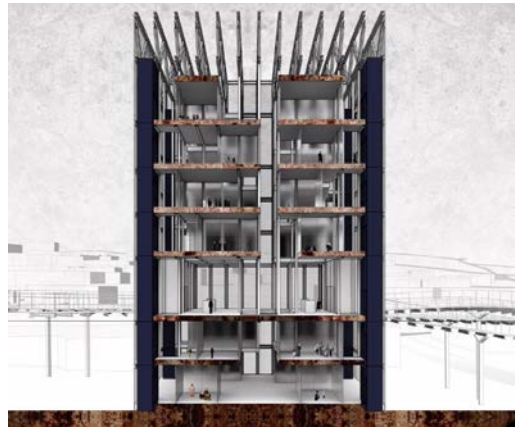
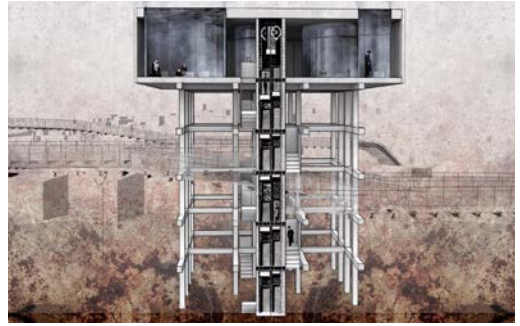
ENGINEERED PARADISES: CATHARSIS, ENCOUNTER, AND REST

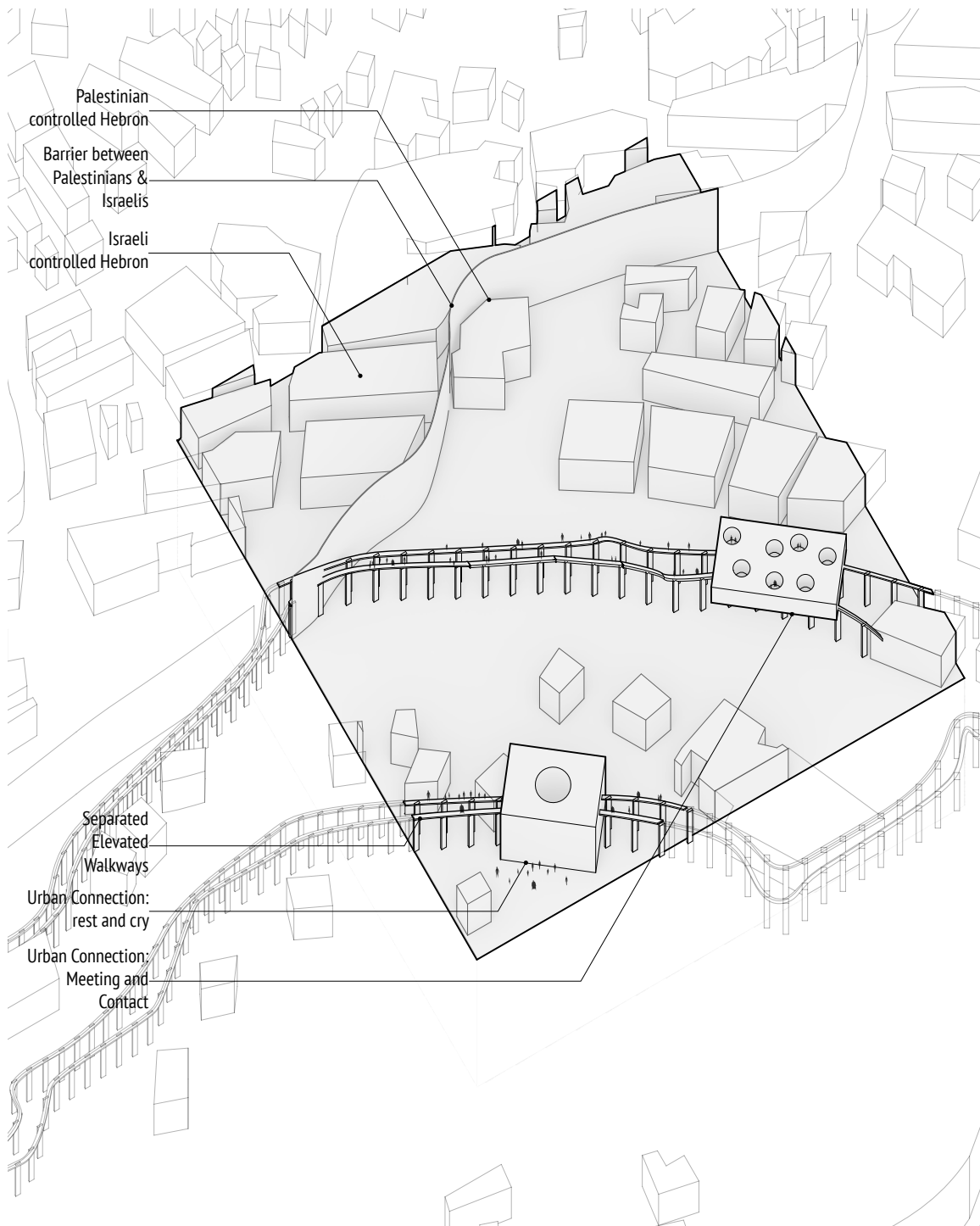
Zarith Pineda (2015)

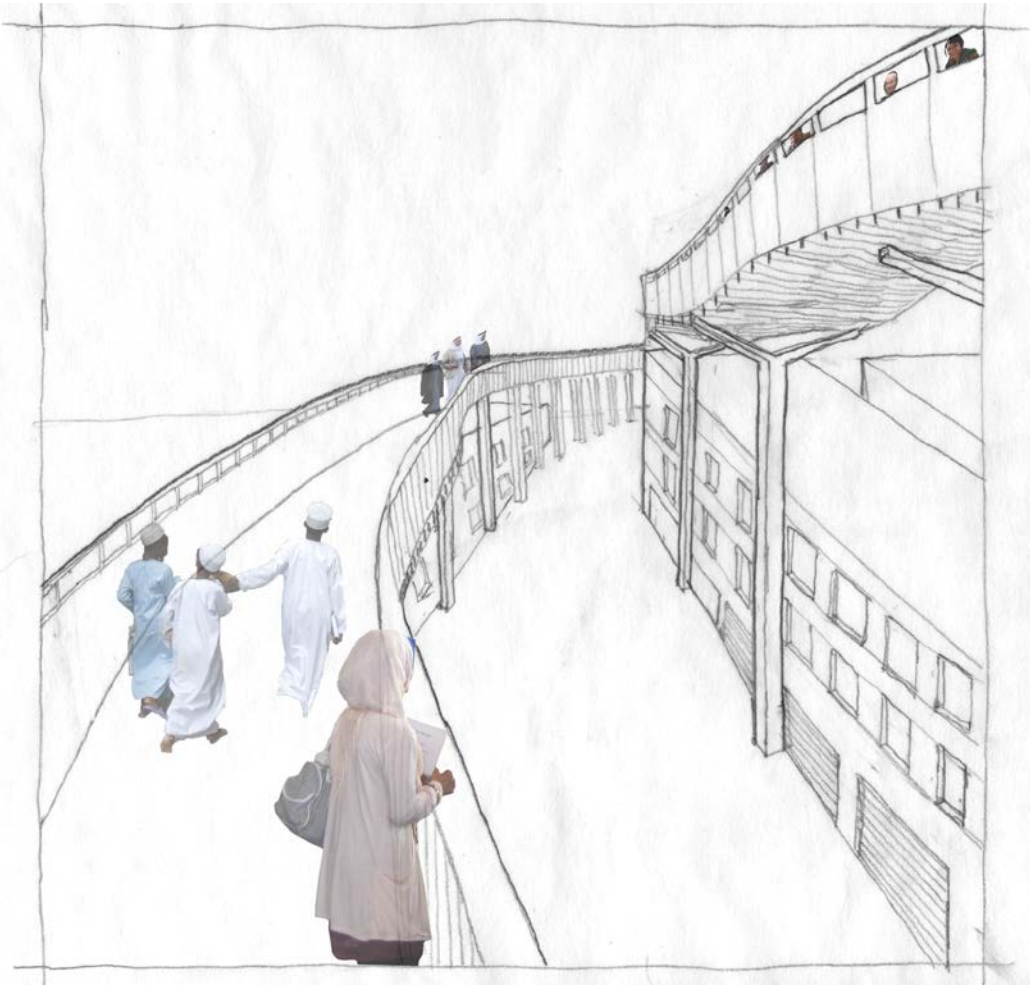
As a strategy for salvaging the relationship between the current divided people of Israel and the West Bank, Zarith Pineda analyzed and projected an architectural strategy for the people of Hebron, a city that suffered great attrition due to the political conflict. Her idea was to use the emotional commonalities between the people, in order to bring them together under a common set of pretexts. The ground, where much of the conflict was confined to, was declared sacred while her architectural intervention floated above. By emphasizing certain detachments and exposing similarities between both sides, she is intentionally creating new opportunities for contact. By creating a series of nodes along the edge of the city and around significant conflict spaces, she successfully highlights aspects of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict rarely seen. Each node represents a unique emotional response, catharsis, encounter and rest. Using these safe spaces for emotional contact, Pineda devised a mediation of the emotional conflict through architectural space.

"The thesis proposes that in proving shared spaces whose programs are dedicated to the safe expression of universal emotions [such as; mourning, fatigue, love, embarrassment, solitude] between dissonant factions in conflict areas, users will be forced to confront the humanity of the ostracized other in hopes of catalyzing enough empathy for acceptance and eventual hopeful reconciliation."

-Zarith Pineda







Politics

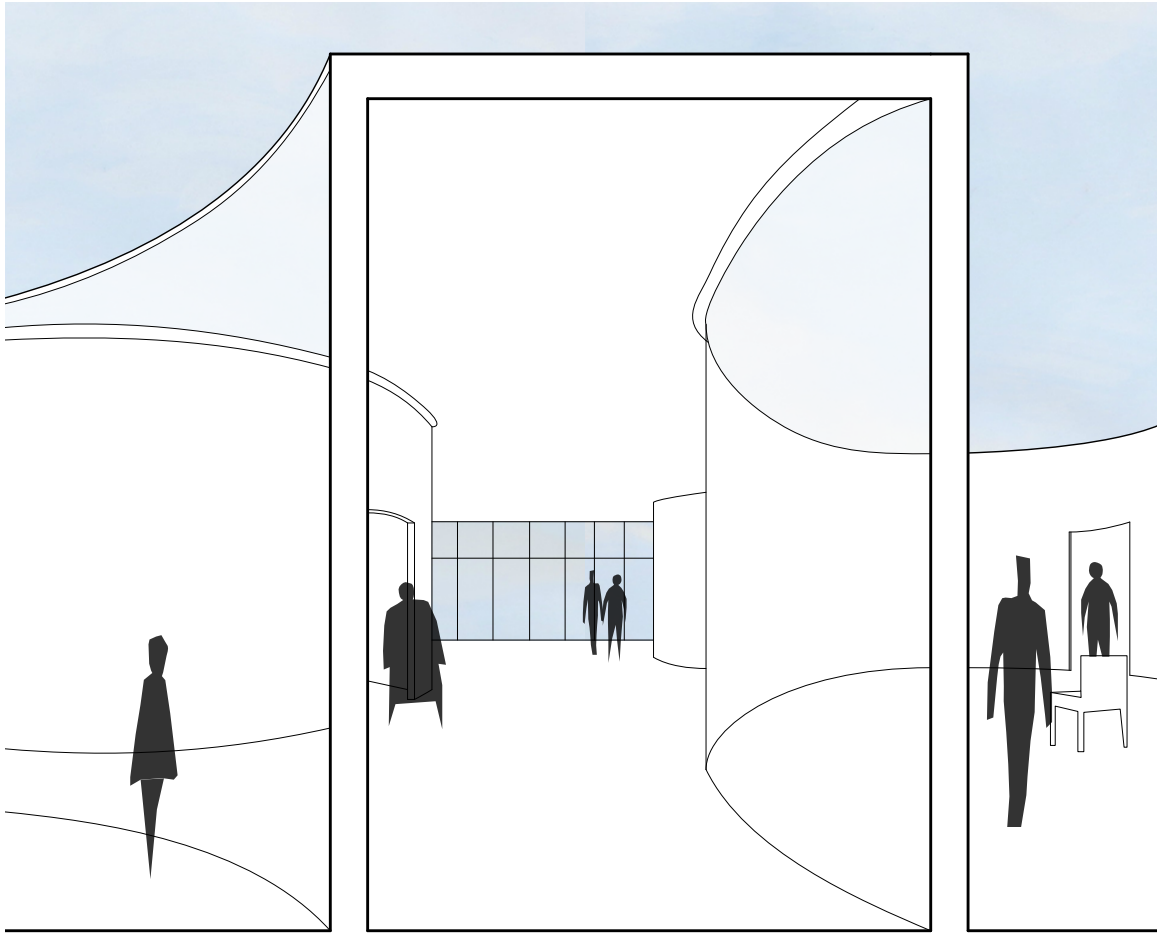
This project attempts to provide a new safe space for both Palestinians and Israelis elevated above the highly contested city of Hebron.

The Site

The city of Hebron is currently divided into two parts, this urban apartheid has created a dangerous environment for the sustainability and life of the city.

How did they make a wall?

The separation happens through a series of elevated walkways with three instances of connections between Israelis and Palestinians.



Program

Accompanying the elevated walkways are a series of interior spaces for Palestinians and Israelis to have specific interactions. These interactions manifest themselves as spaces for rest, for remembrance, and for conversation/confrontation.

Materiality

The buildings and walkways are steel constructions.

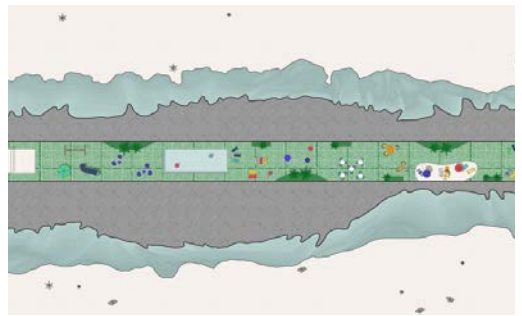
DRAPE WALL

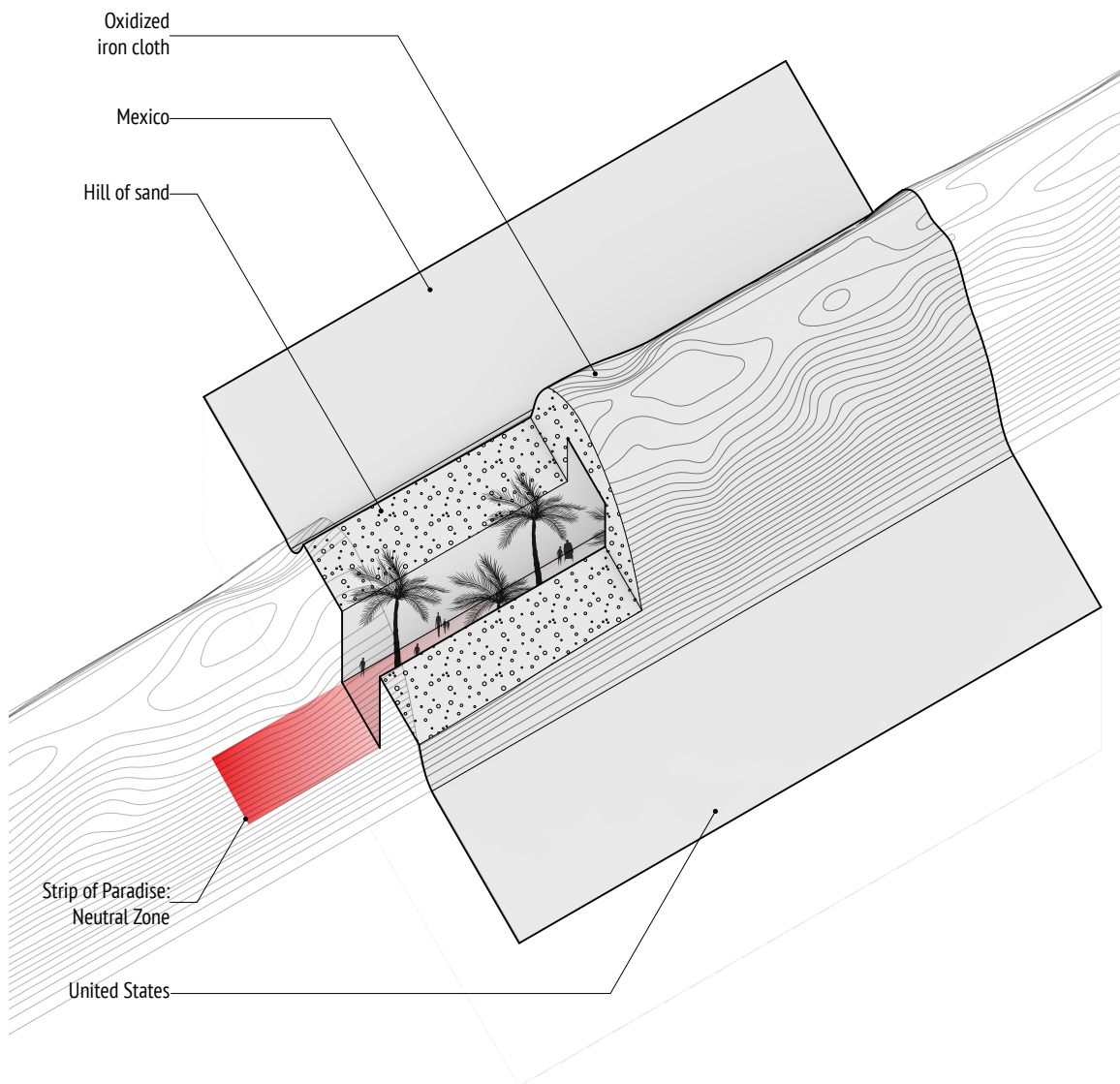
Future Expansions (2016)

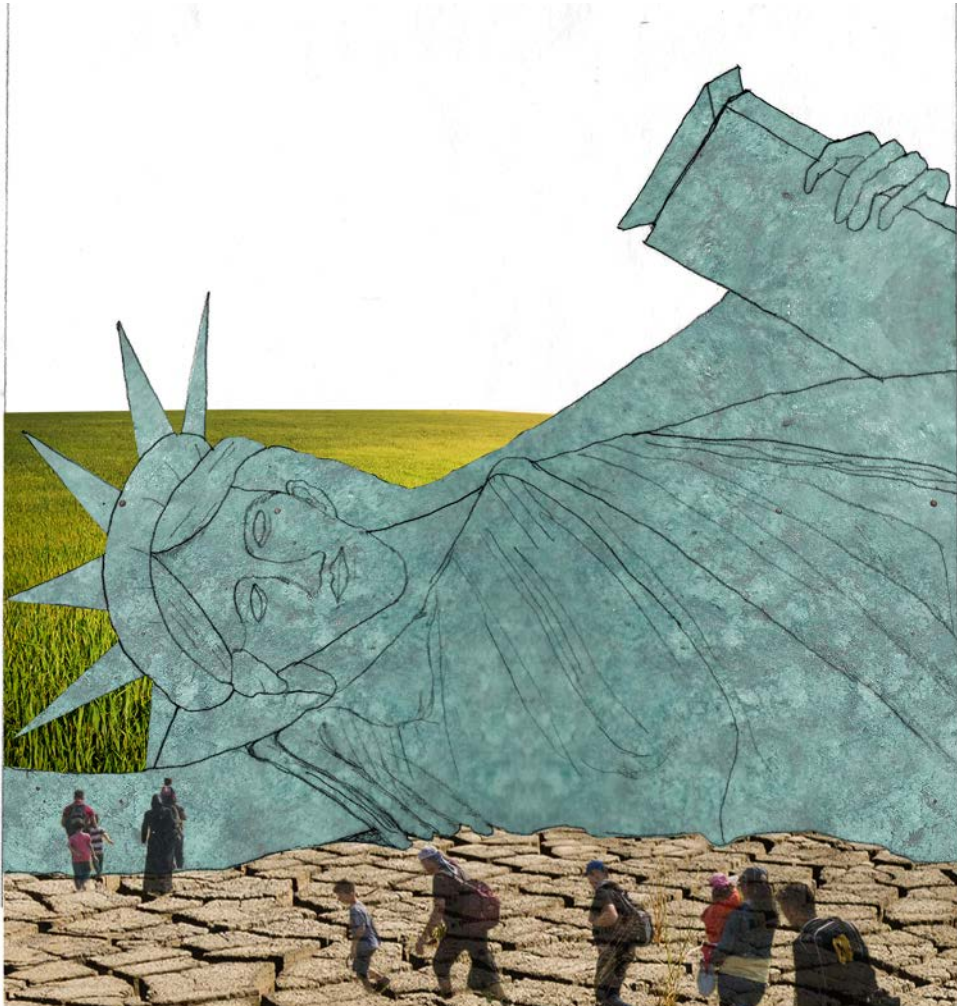
Republican nominee, Donald Trump made the signature promise of putting up a wall along the United States – Mexico Border. Future Expansion's response to this design of a border wall scheme was to build a monumental "structure." Using symbolism of Lady Liberty's flowing gown for an iconic effect is simply draped over a hollow mass that creates an oasis. This monumental fence is now a gathering place.

"When Donald Trump first approached us to design a border wall, we were skeptical. Giving it more thought, however, we realized that the border already exists. We wouldn't be creating a barrier, merely decorating an existing one. It was a task we could get behind. Inspired by Lady Liberty's flowing gown, we decided that the well known symbol, iconic but almost completely hollow, needed substance."

-Future Expansions







Politics

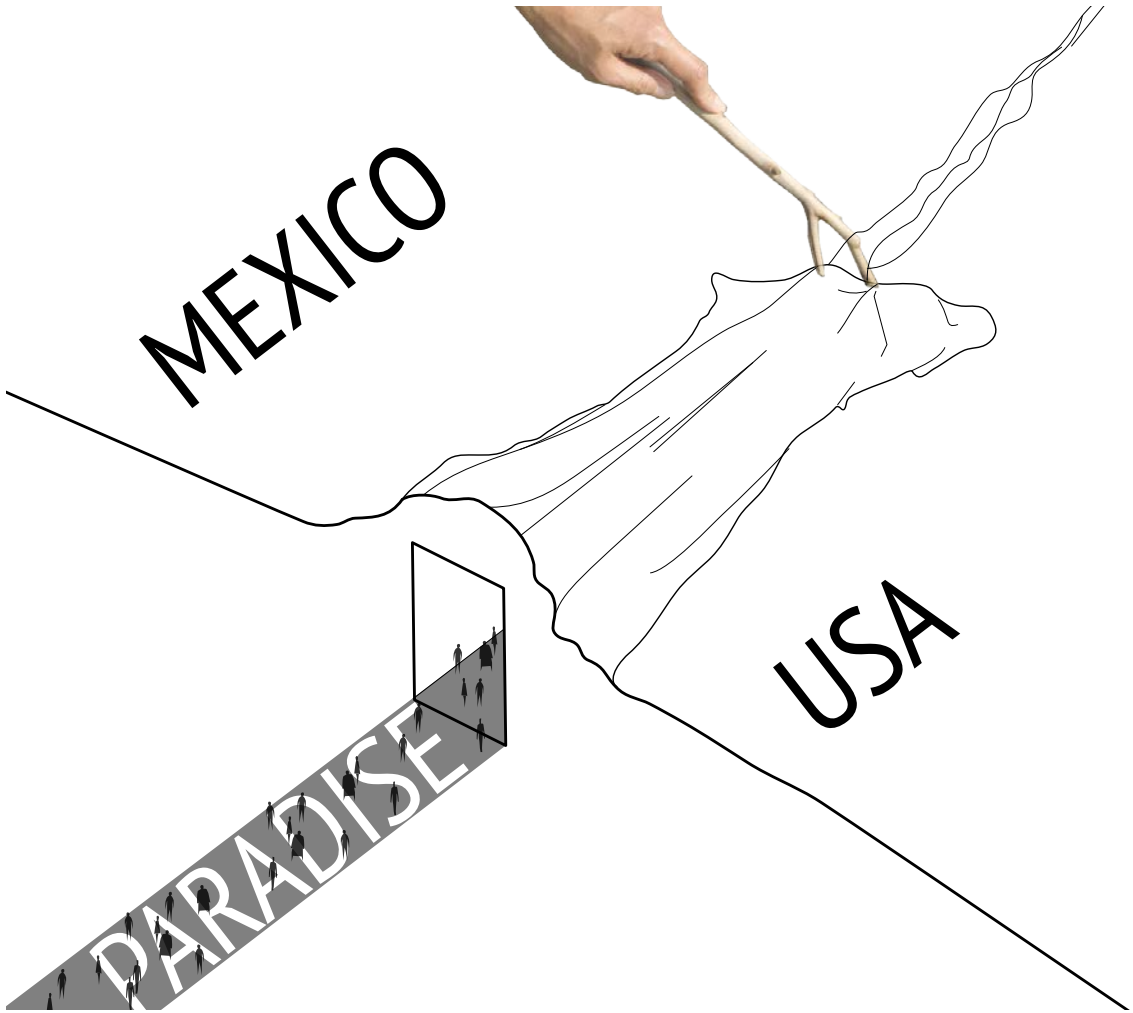
The Drape Wall exists as a divisional space between the United States and Mexico. This project was in response to Donald Trump's call for the building of a wall to curb any influx of illegal immigration.

The Site

The border between the US and Mexico runs through urban, suburban and rural areas. The site plan situates the project within a desert along the border.

How did they make a wall?

For this project, the wall is formally playing on the existing border typology known as an Earth mound. Within the Earth mound is the symbol for some sort of spatial paradise, disconnected from both nations.



Program

Paradise located underneath the Drape Wall is more of a symbol than a real place. Paradise represents a gathering place, a linear oasis, a Tex-Mex paradise, a little shade from the sun.

Materiality

Other than the dirt mound itself, the only significant material is the draped copper dress located on top of the dirt mound. This dress represents the dress of the Statue of Liberty.

THE CONTINUOUS ENCLAVE: STRATEGIES IN BYPASS URBANISM

Viktor Ramos (2009)

Using the Oslo Accords as a set of parameters, the project investigates new forms of habitable infrastructure that could potentially conclude to a “geopolitical agreement.” The result of transportation, housing and agriculture solutions come from architectural speculation. This project links the dispersed towns through a network of bridges. The project avoids the most obvious and expected pitfall of such an approach.

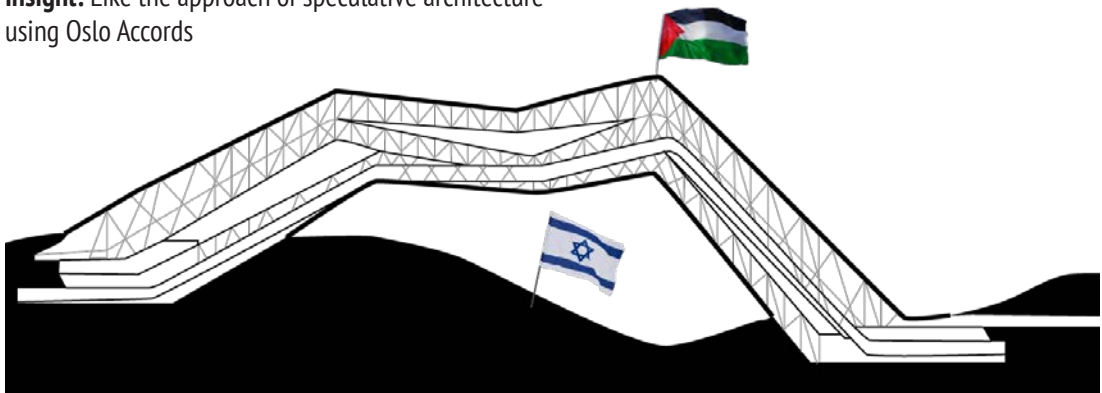
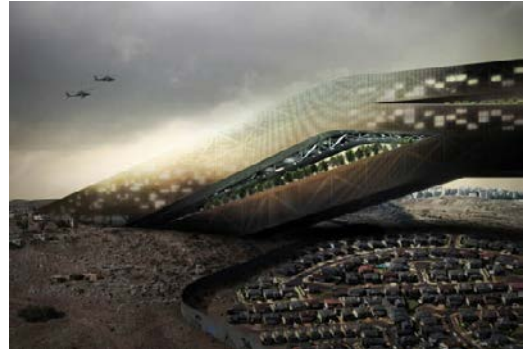
“In the process, a continuous form of urbanization has been developed to allow for the growth and expansion of the Palestinian state. Ultimately, this thesis questions the potential absurdity of partition strategies within the West Bank and Gaza Strip by attempting to realize them.”

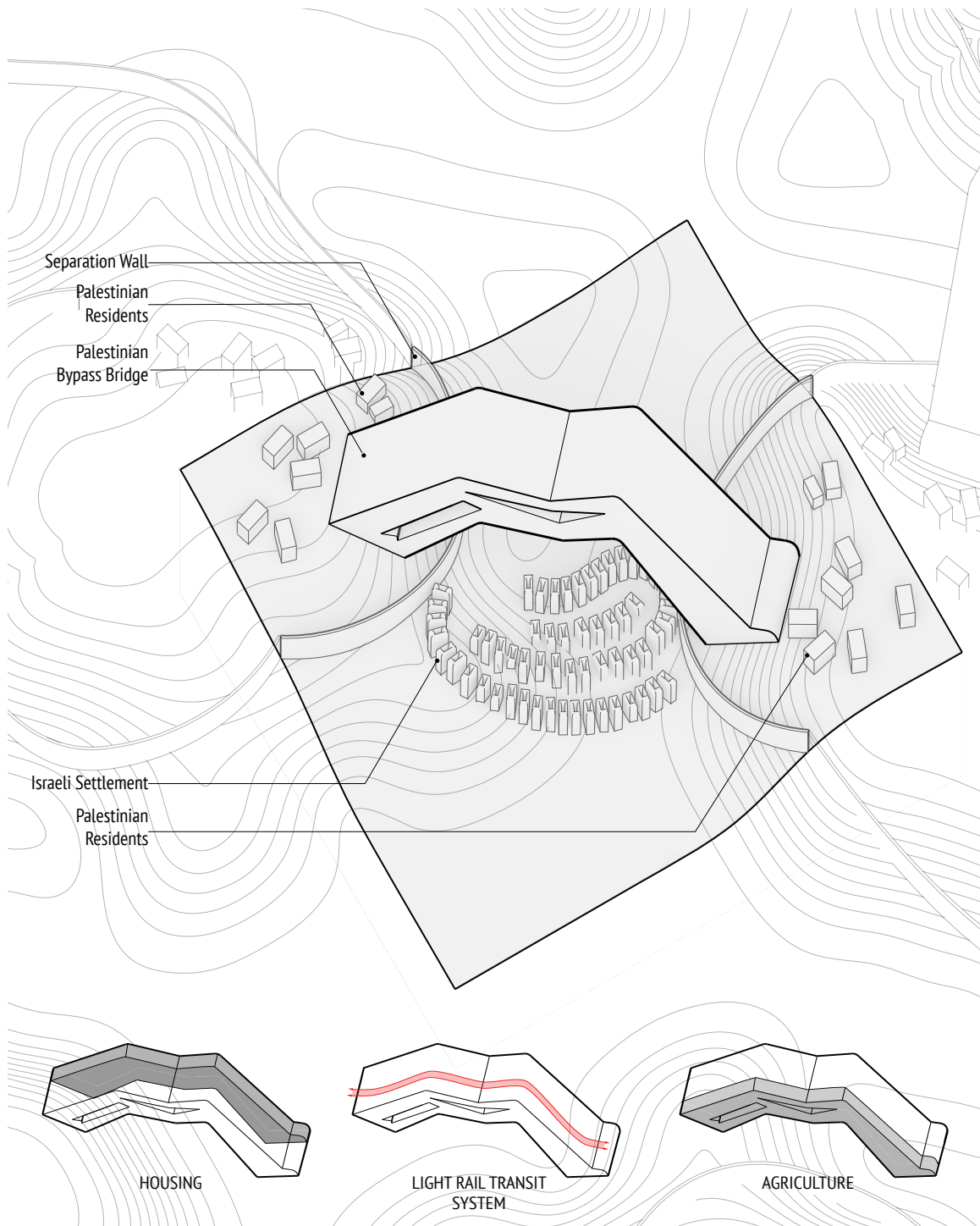
-Viktor Ramos

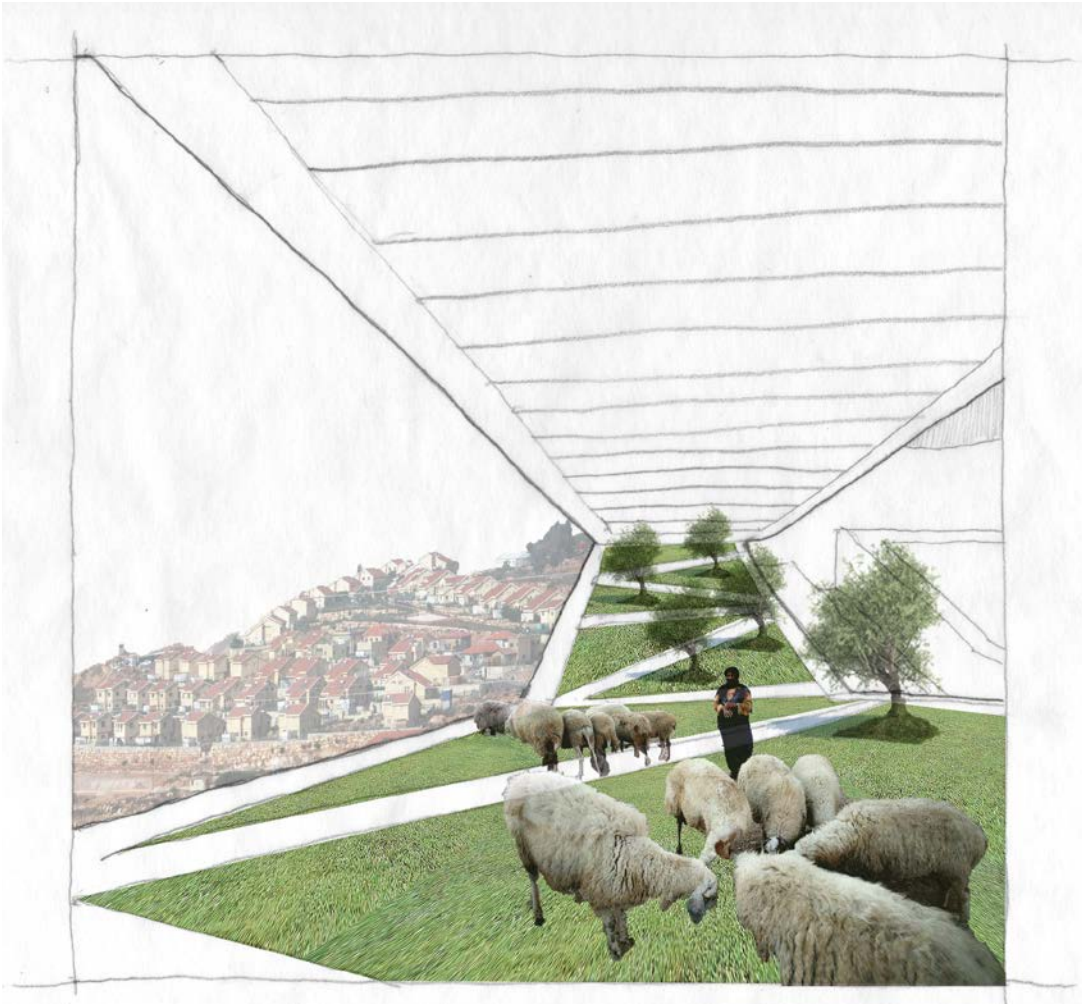
Which leads to what Ramos calls “bypass urbanism,” or a self-connected maze of new territories in the sky.

What worked: Connecting and linking different towns to one another

Insight: Like the approach of speculative architecture using Oslo Accords







Politics

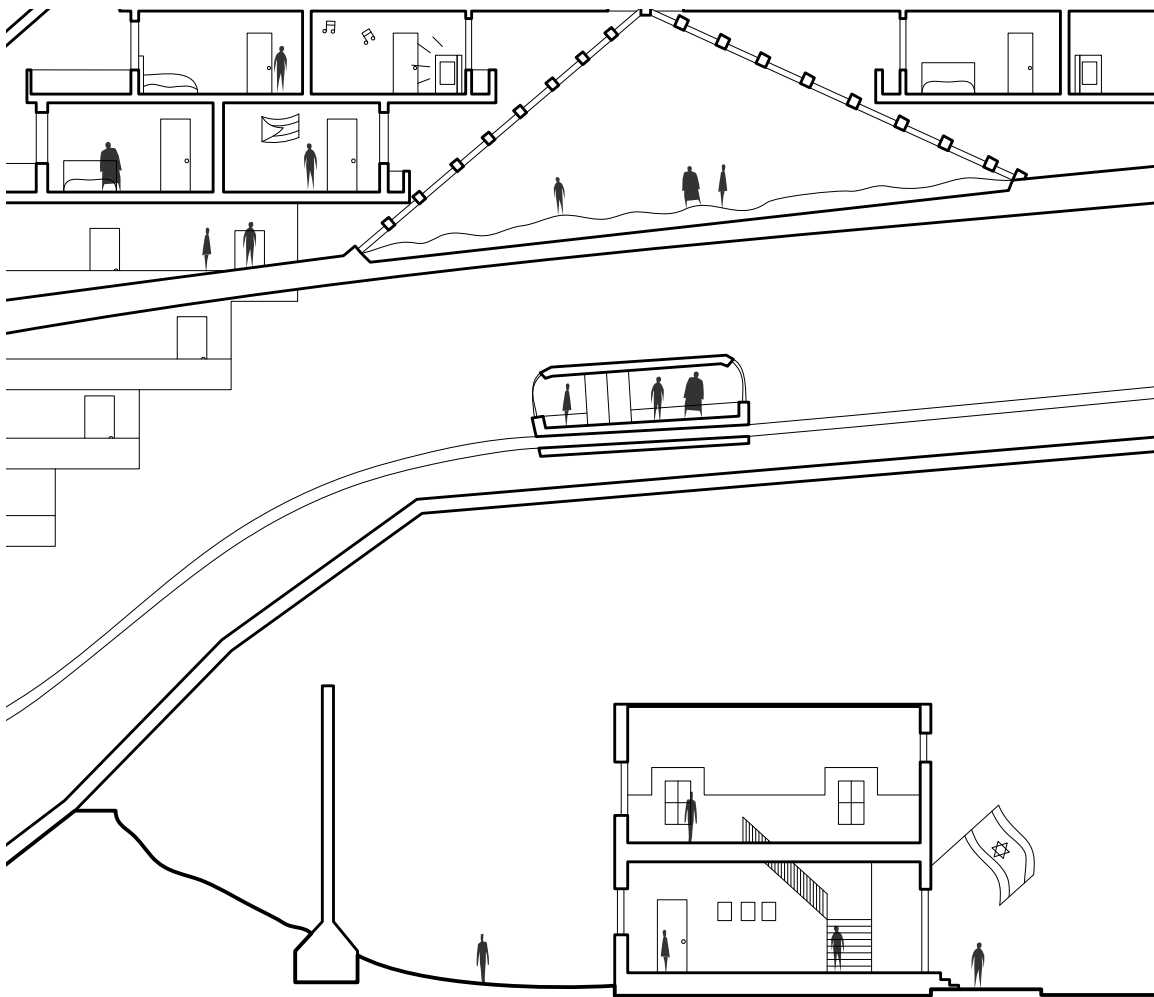
This strategy for linking Palestinian neighborhoods is based out of the parameters set under the Oslo Accords.

The Site

In order to bypass the oppressive Israeli border control, this scheme proposes to pass over each Israeli settlement located in Palestinian land. By placing this new urbanism in a cantilever structure, the politics of the conflict are removed from their sacred grounds.

How did they make a wall?

The cantilevered city connects people of the West Bank by overpassing Israeli settlements. By removing the Palestinian people from their land, there becomes a complete disconnect between the two communities.



Program

Activating the Palestinian economy through a new network of bridge connections was this project's main goal. Within each bridge is Palestinian housing, a commuter rail, and outdoor agricultural spaces to compensate for missing Israeli occupied land.

Materiality

The project is a fantastical structure made of steel to span miles over Israeli settlements.

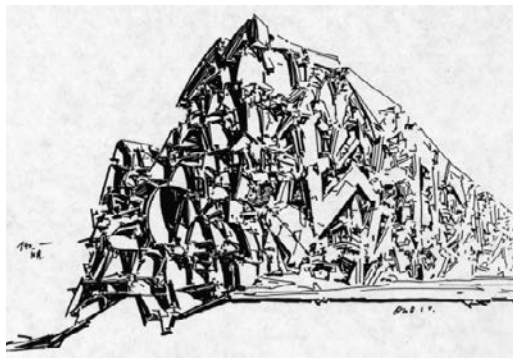
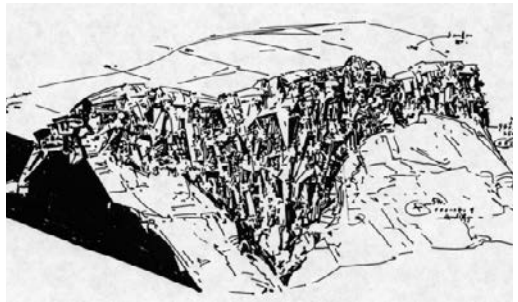
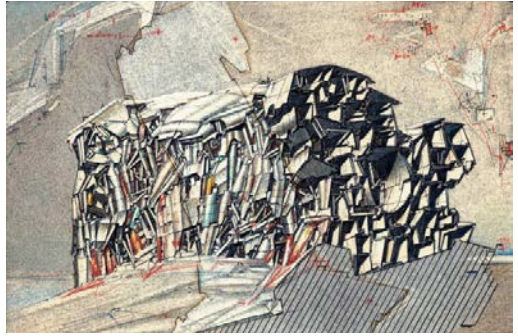
METASTRUCTURE: THE WALL OF THE BOSNIA FREE STATE

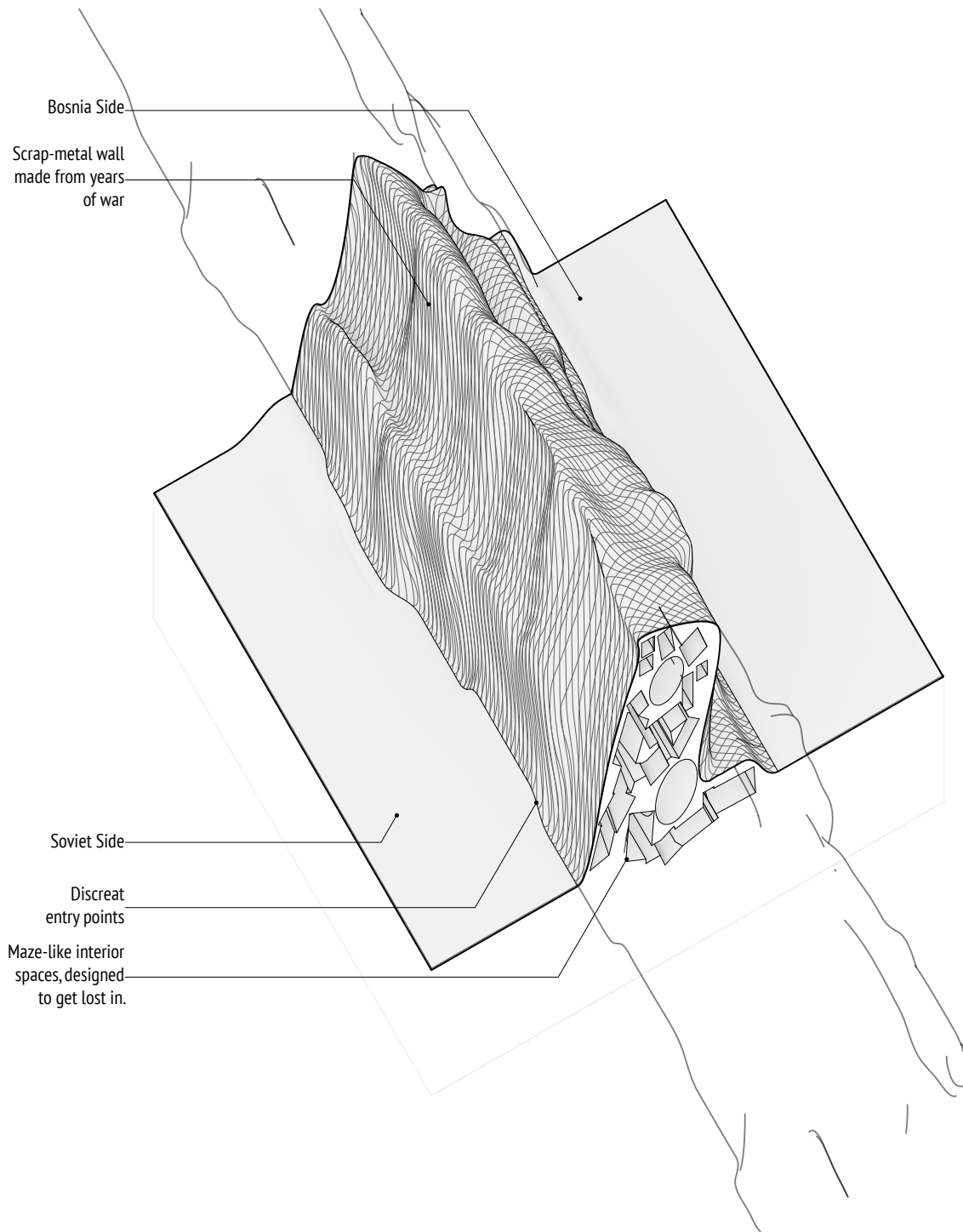
Lebbeus Woods (2009)

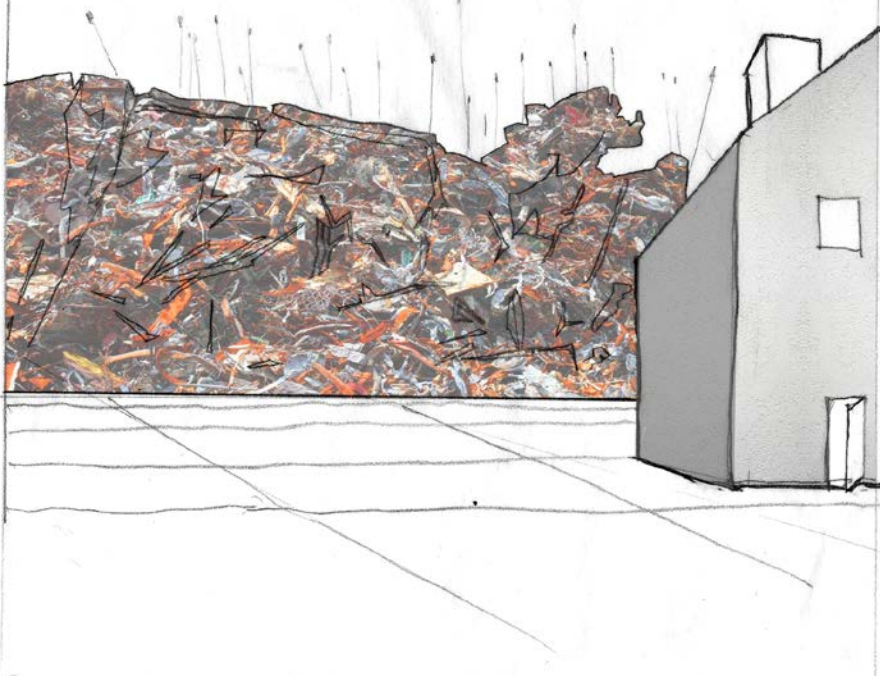
Surrounded by two countries at war with each other, Mostar became a city at the epicenter of the conflict. The United Nations, in attempts to deescalate the fighting, declared the entire country of Bosnia a no-fly zone. The rules of war, although intended to avoid innocent casualties, had created a devastating scene on the ground in Bosnia. With the city of Mostar being plundered by tanks from both sides, the city desperately needed a radical defense mechanism to shield its people. The rationale for Lebbeus Woods to interject his formless security structure into the city of Mostar, was for protection of its people from the outside. Although the idea seemed imaginary, Woods proposes radical interventions as a way to test our existing methodologies. His intended structure would be constructed unsystematically using the left behind remnants of the ground siege. Stacked hundreds of feet into the sky and made up by a series of small spaces, the wall would act as sponge.

“Foot soldiers could not climb over the wall in large numbers, but would have to go through it. Once inside, they would become lost. Many would not be able to escape. They would either die, or, as it were, move in, inhabiting the spaces, even forming communities. Local farmers from the Bosnian side, could arrange to supply food and water, on a sale or barter basis. In time, they would move in, too, to be close to their market. Families would be living together. The wall would become a city.”

-Lebbeus Woods







Politics

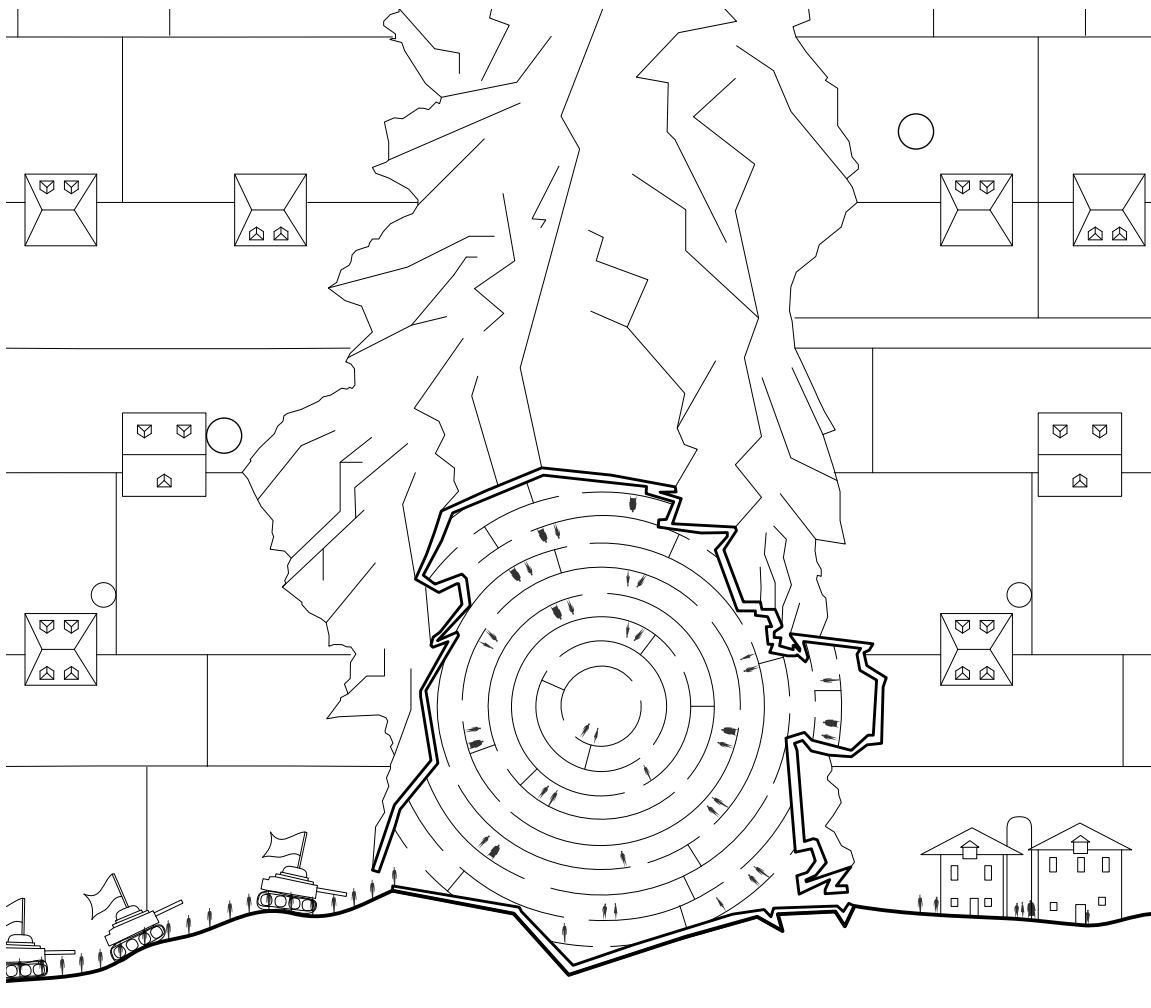
This wall symbolizes a defense mechanism for the city of Mostar. The people of Mostar have been under constant seige by the Soviet militaries from all sides.

The Site

Located along the outer edge of Mostar, this wall situates itself around the various landscapes of Bosnia. It sometimes finds itself along the hillside, next to farmlands, or even within the city fabric.

How did they make a wall?

The wall was created from the layering and stacking of leftover metal scraps over the years of war.



Program

The wall is left unprogrammed, with the intention of creating a maze of spaces in which the military and people get lost together in.

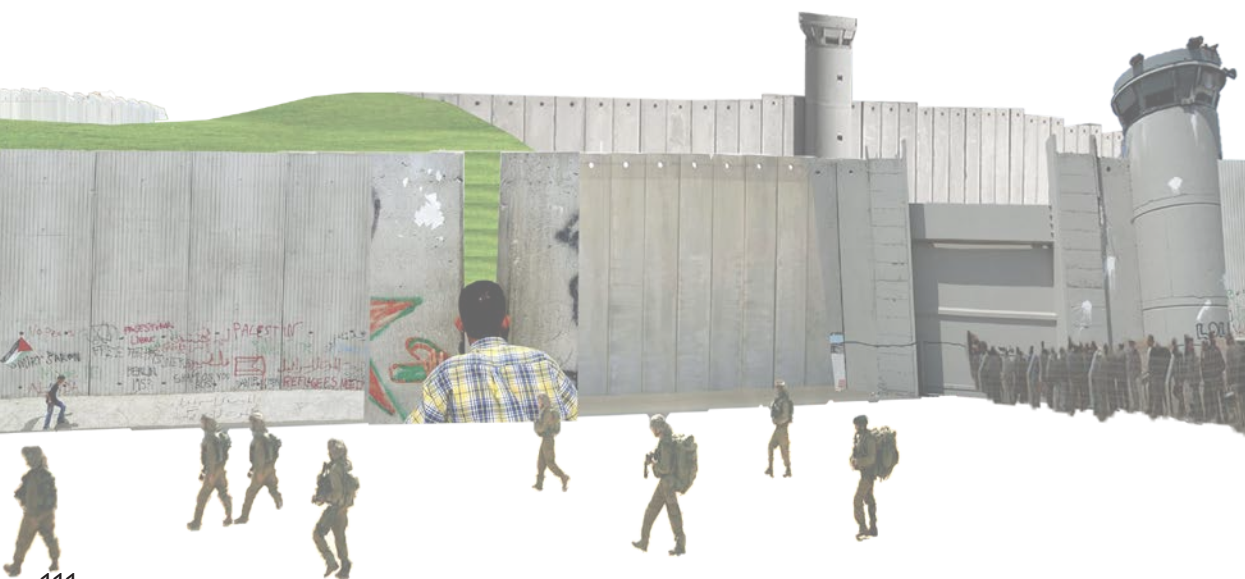
Materiality

The wall is made up of leftover metal scraps from the years of attrition to the city of Bosnia.

6

THE BREACH

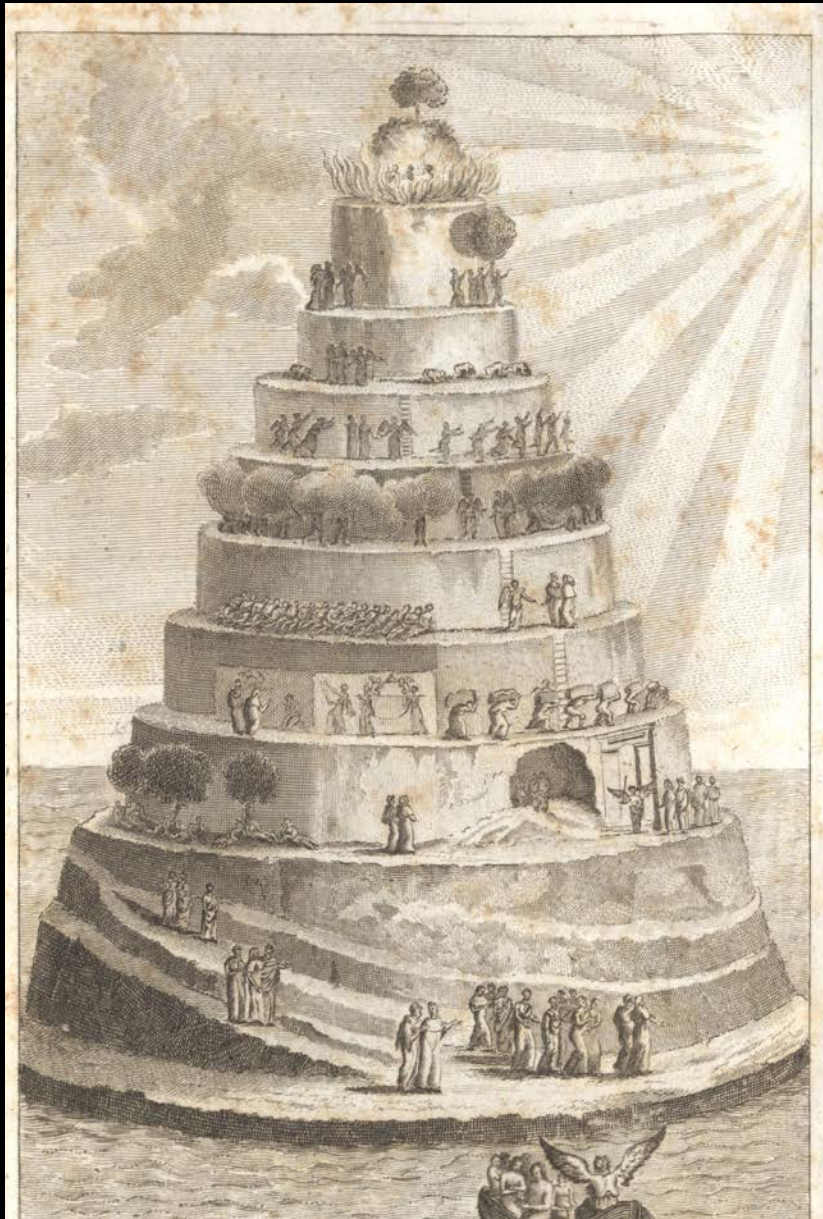




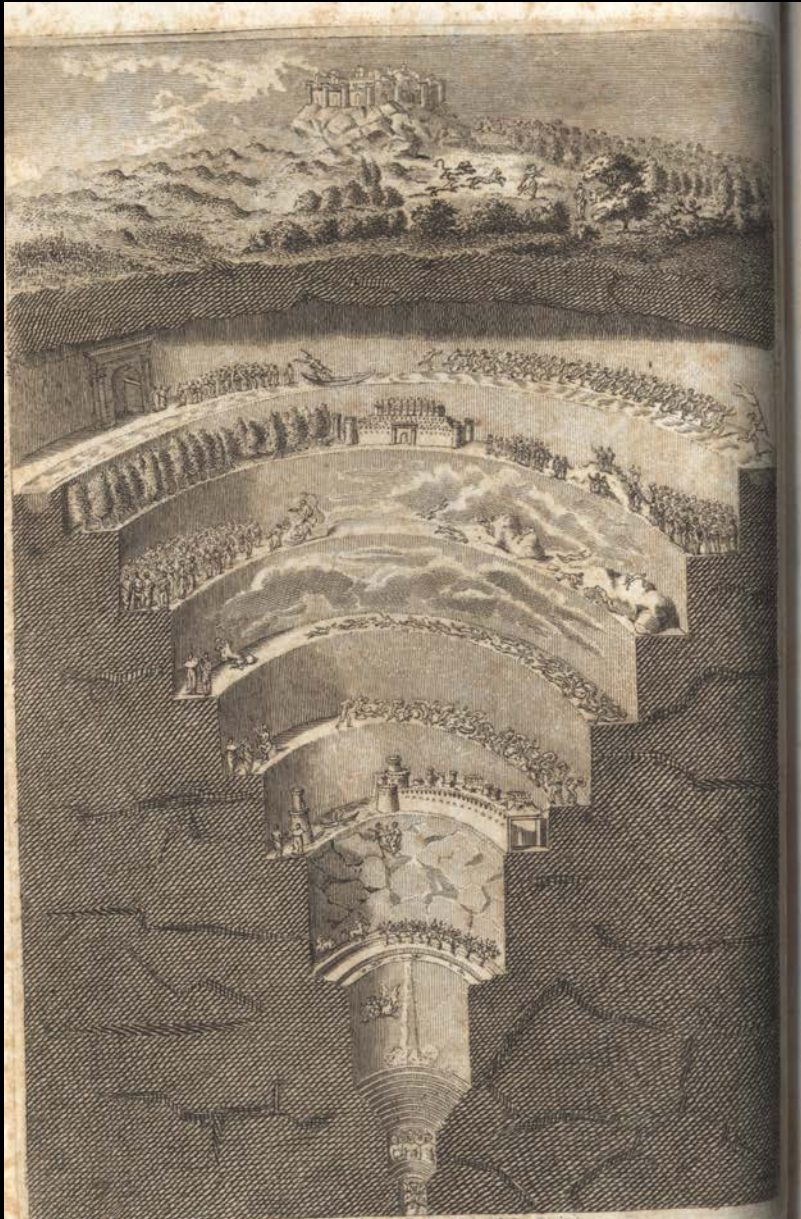
Eden



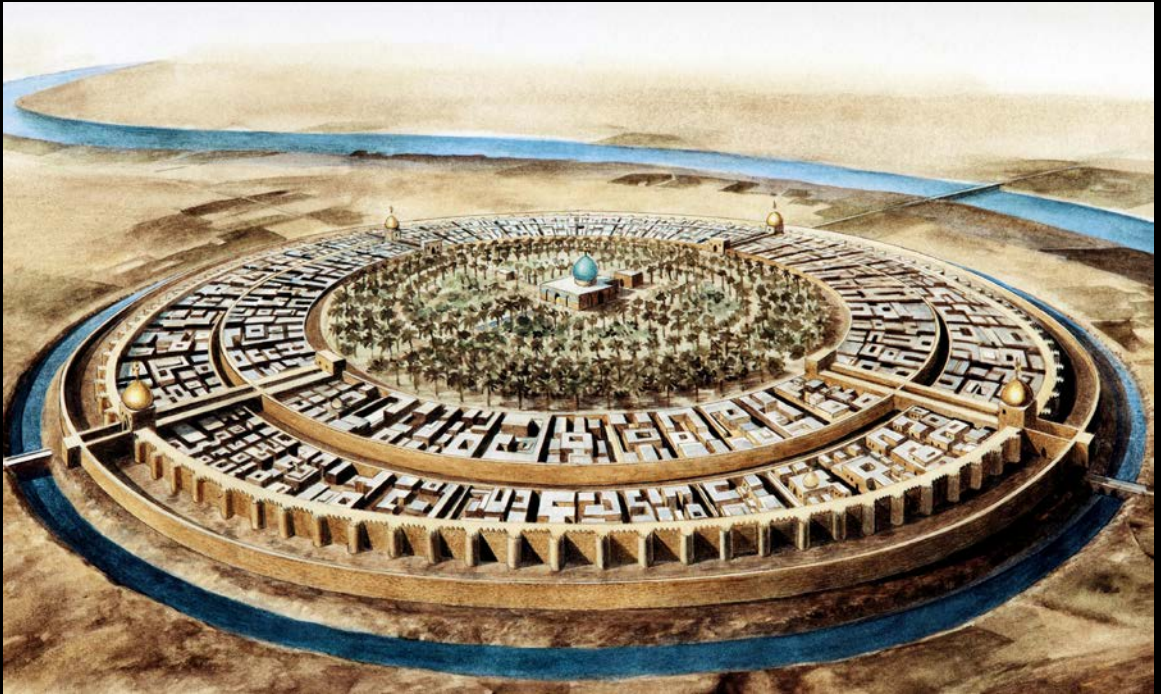
Purgatorio



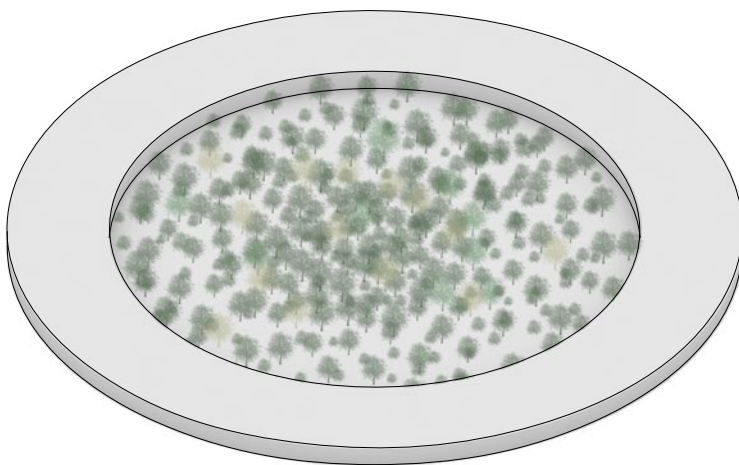
Inferno



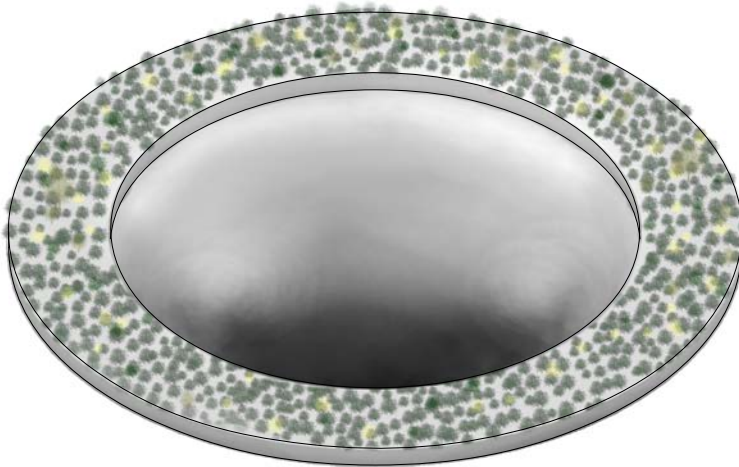
Round City of Baghdad



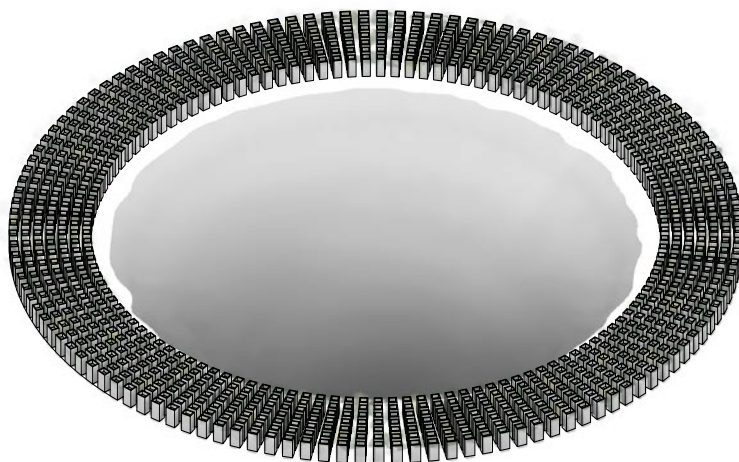
Inspired by historically significant representations of Eden, Purgatory, Inferno, and Utopia; the form of this absurd checkpoint wrestles with both spiritual and religious concepts to create a meaningful response.



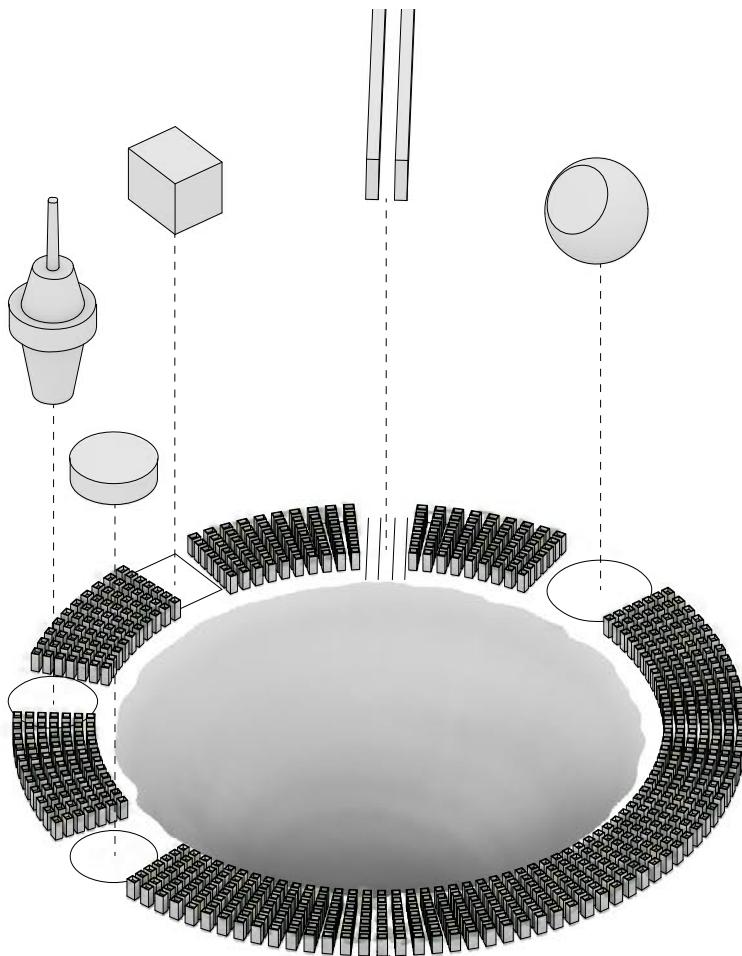
The center in Islamic and Jewish culture is the most holy point, the center of god's existence and represents the all-encompassing nature of god. By filling the circle with a garden-like-paradise and walling it off from the outside, the circle takes on the meaning of the Garden of Eden.



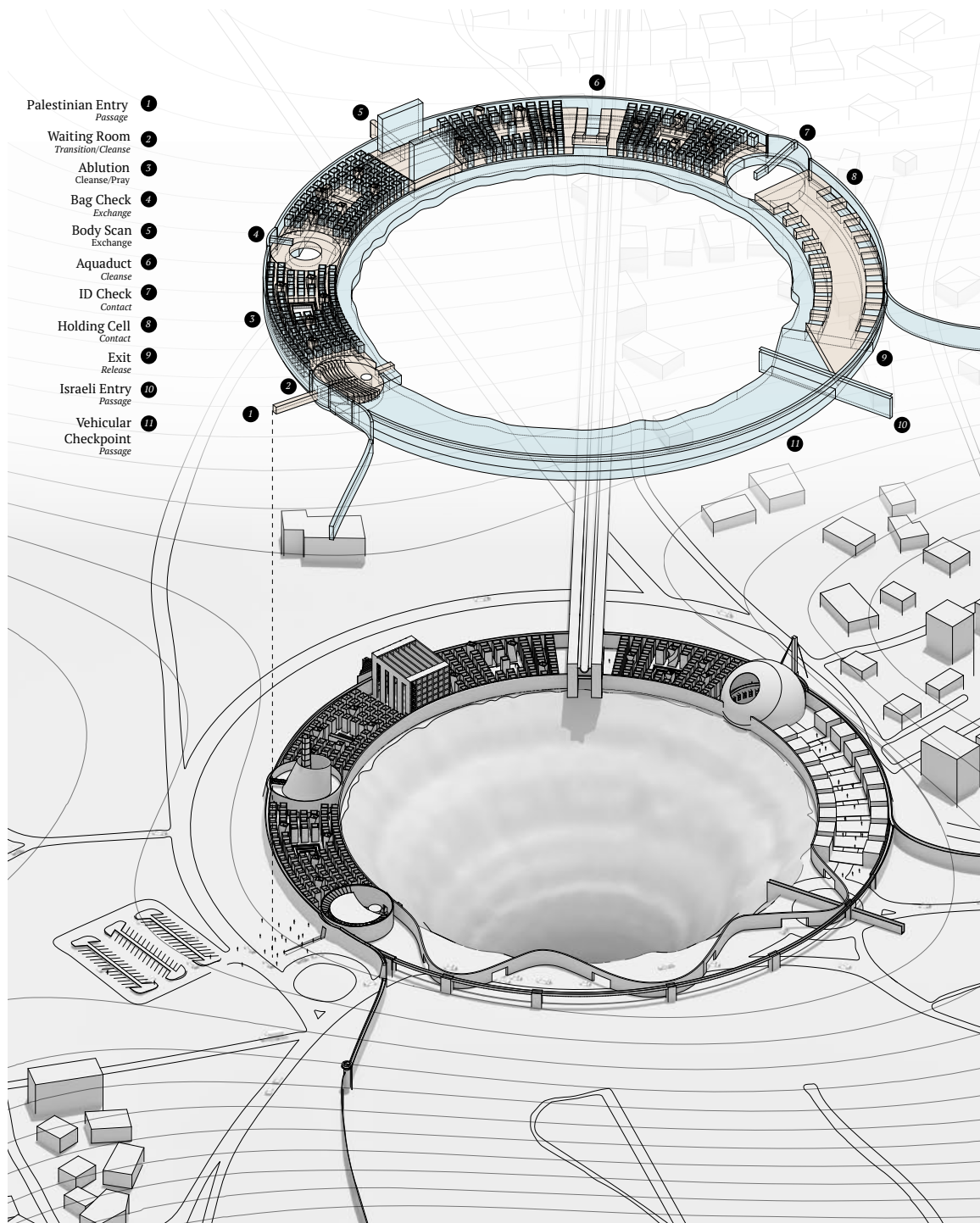
By taking away the center, the void within becomes a signifier to the absence of paradise. The void is used to address the physical emptiness that resulted from this centuries long conflict, which cannot be refilled after the fact.



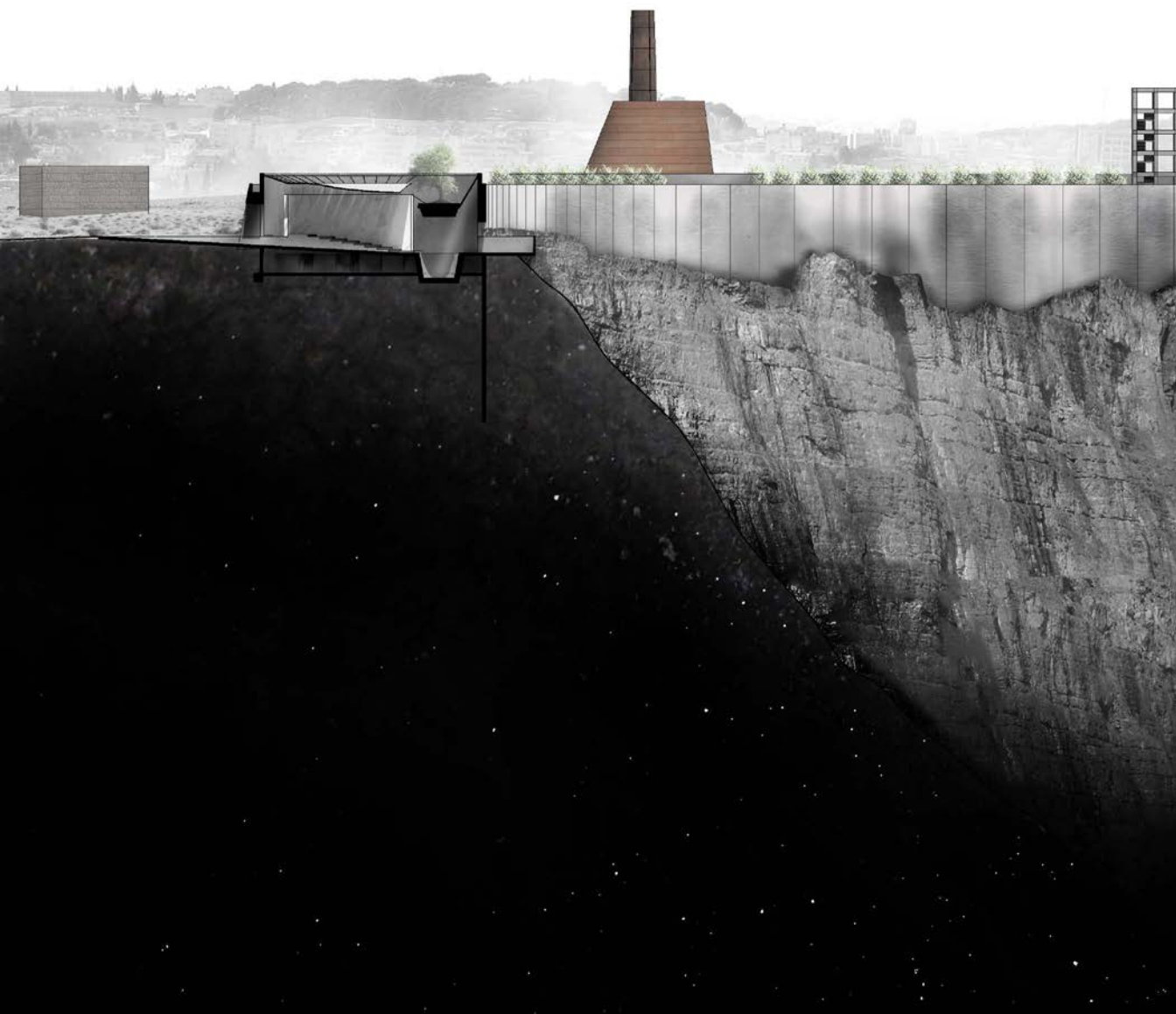
Lifting the trees of paradise onto columns, the process of passing through the columns creates a contemplative experience, reminiscent of a cloister or peristyle hall. Constantly being reminded of the exile from the garden. The olive trees on each column is meant to create a mirage from the outside, while serving as a reminder to the confiscation of resources and banishment from eden.



Placing points along the circle breaks up the continuous movement around the void. These points open up moments for interaction, moments which can become functional program for this absurd border crossing.

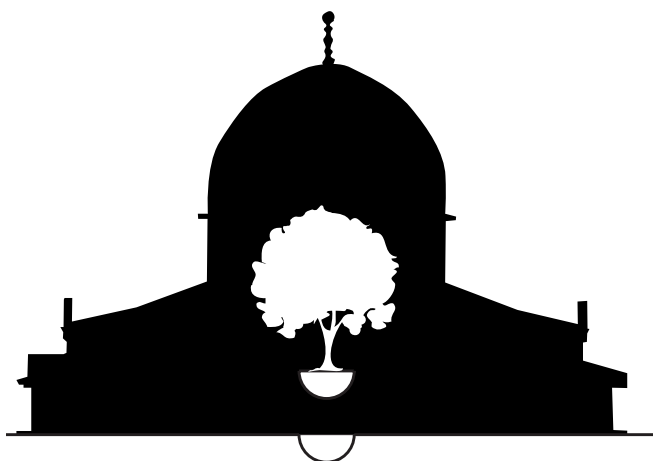
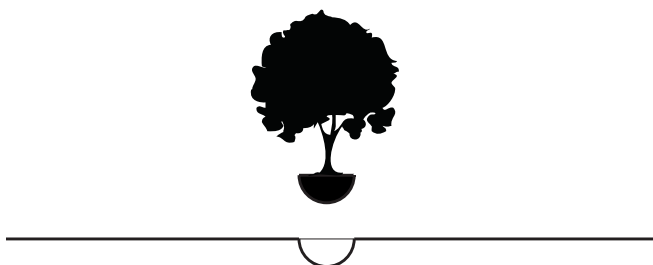
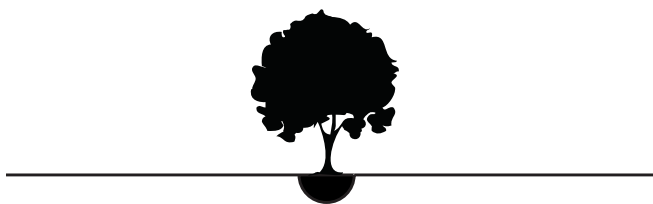


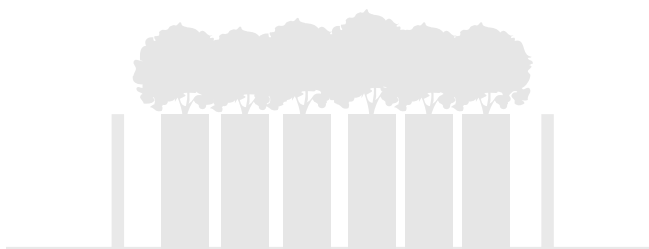
Placing points along the circle breaks up the continuous movement around the void. These points open up moments for interaction, moments which can become functional program for this absurd border crossing.



Cutting through the center of the void reveals the physical emptiness that resulted from this centuries long conflict, which cannot be refilled after the fact. Here, an aqueduct dumps water, a mutually essential resource for both sides, into the pit.

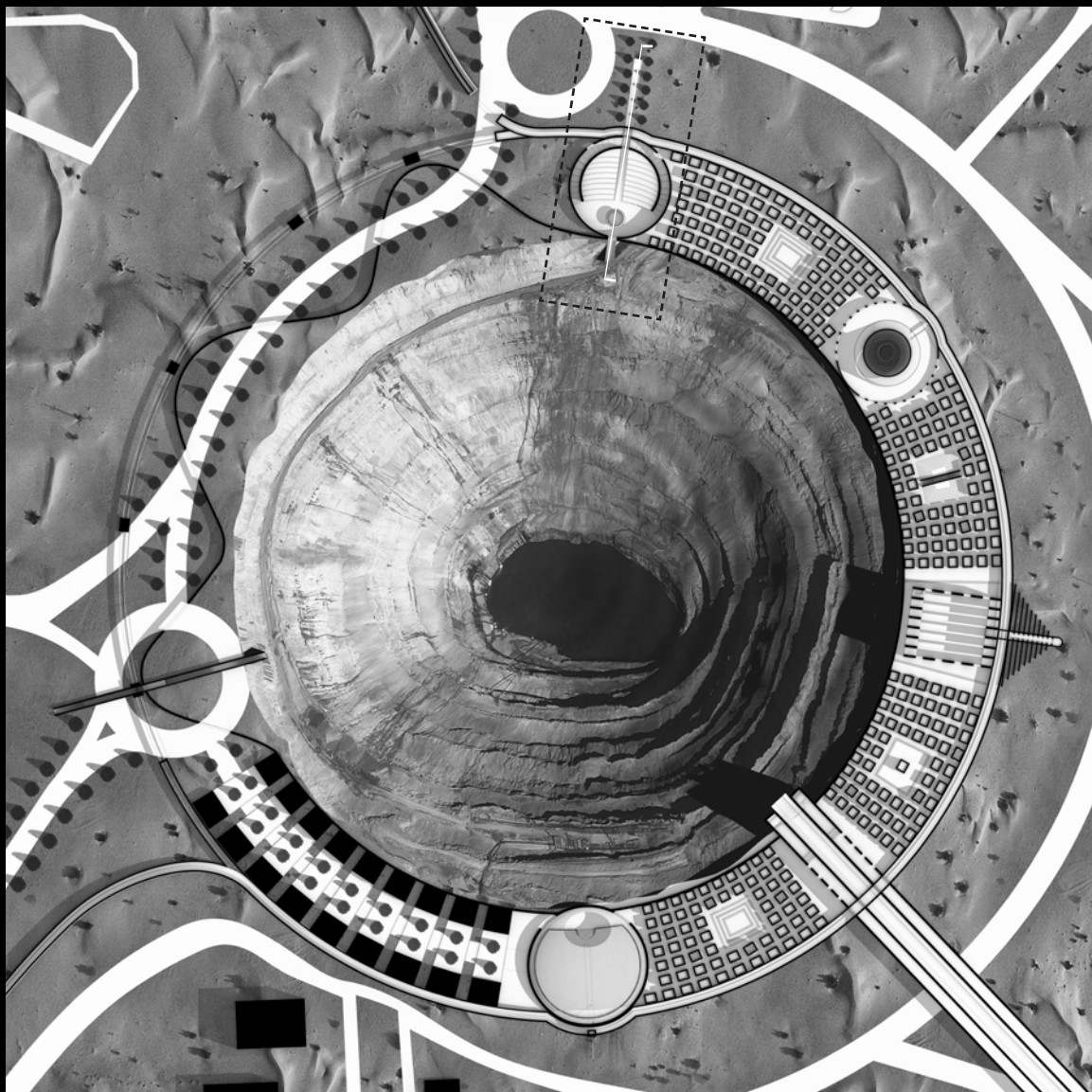


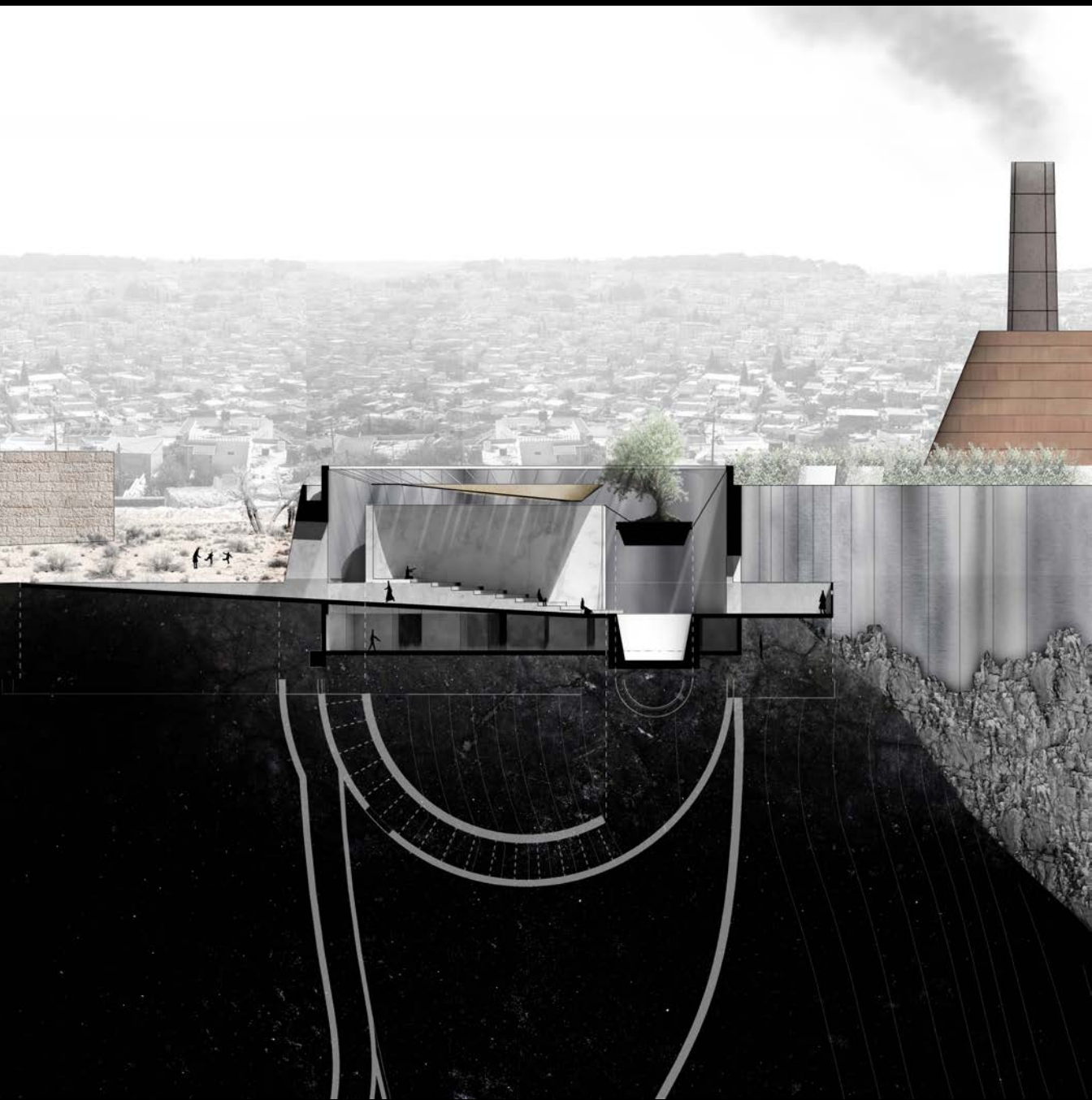




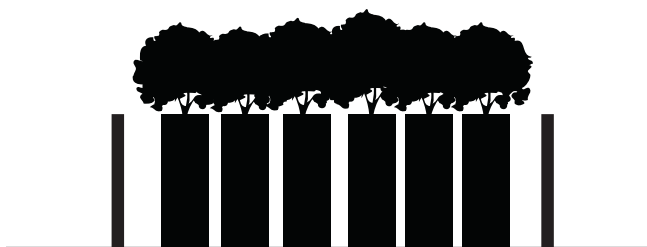


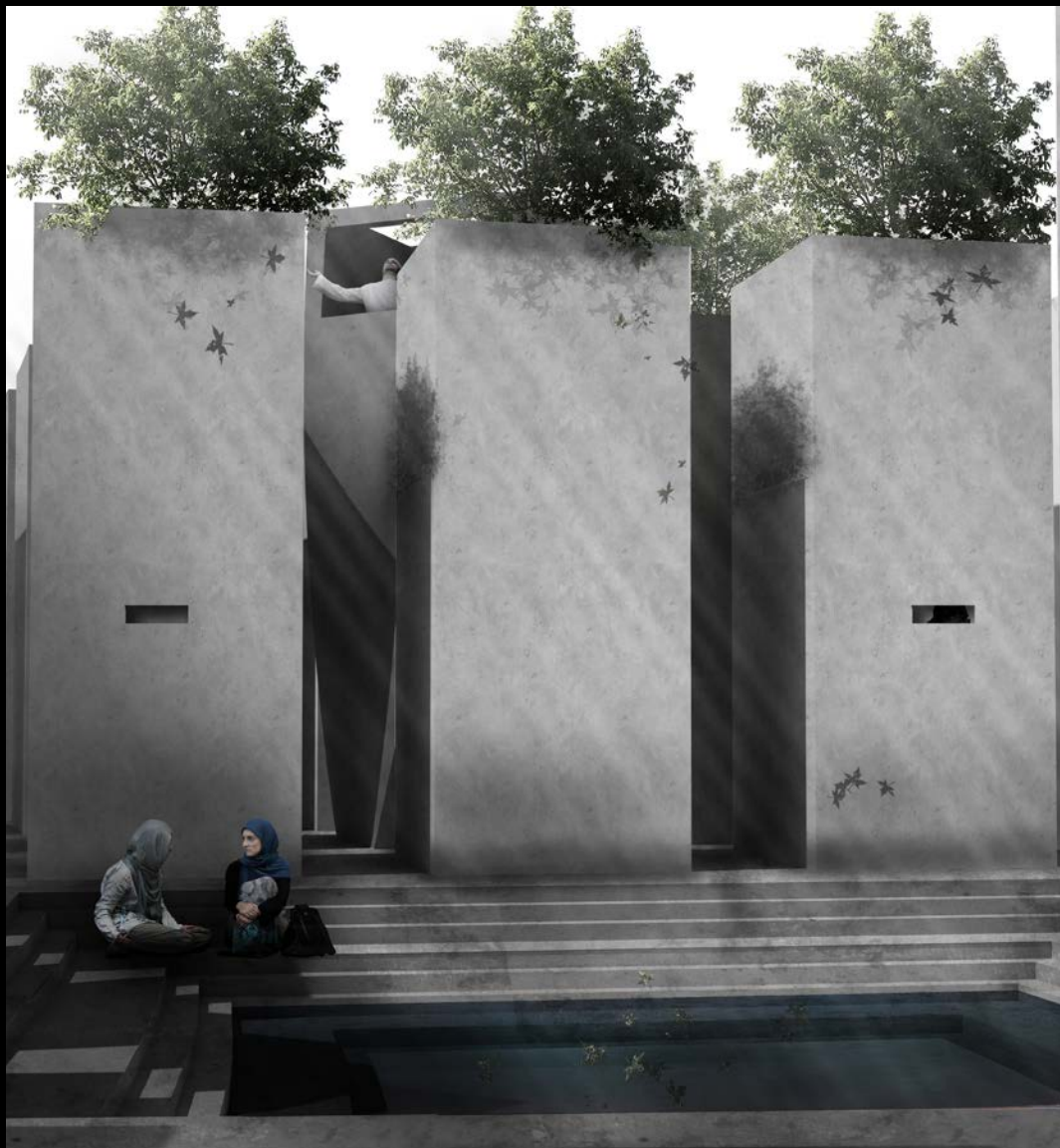
The waiting room, a shrine for catharsis, a place of refuge from the harsh reality becomes the first step to making contact with the other side.







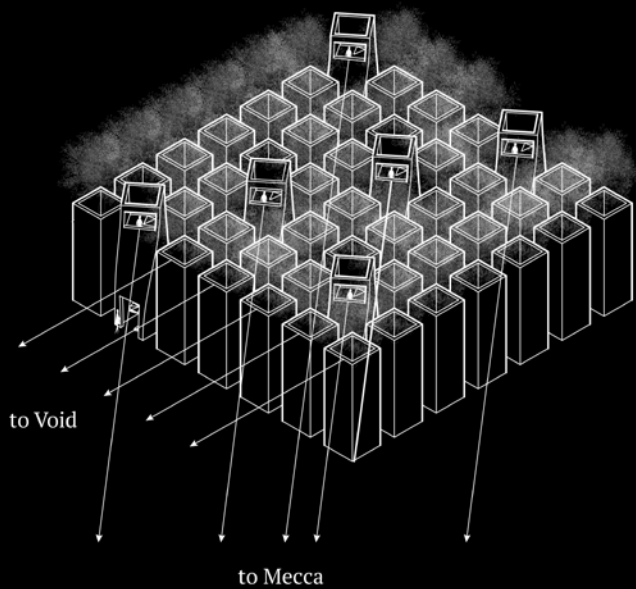




*Passing through the elevated columns of Eden, Palestinians stumble upon
hidden oases, spaces for them to partake in
ritualistic cleansing.*

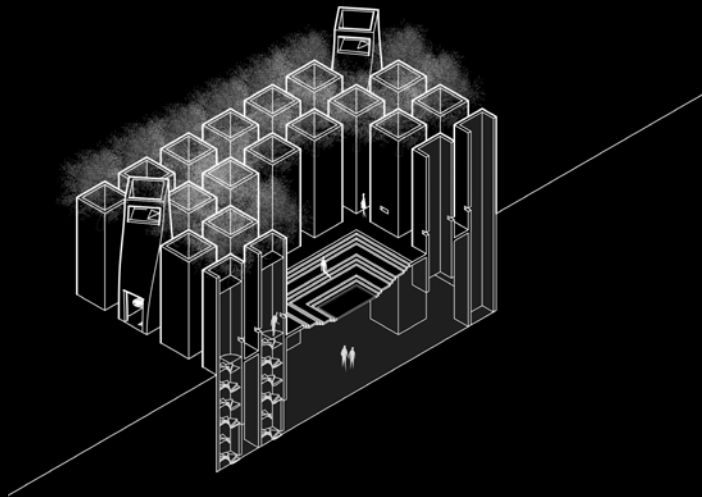


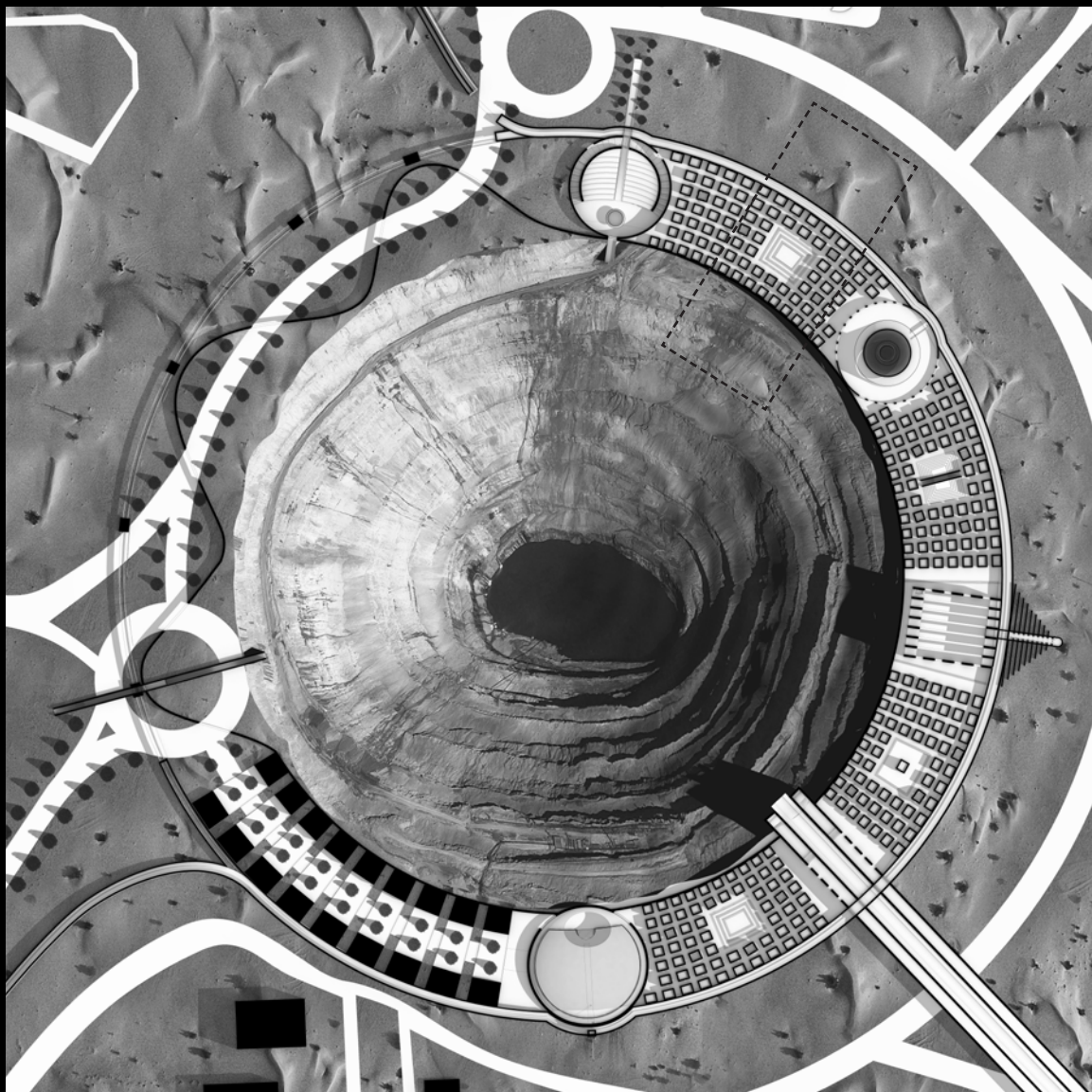
Above, at the level of the Olive trees, some columns turn towards Mecca for daily prayer.

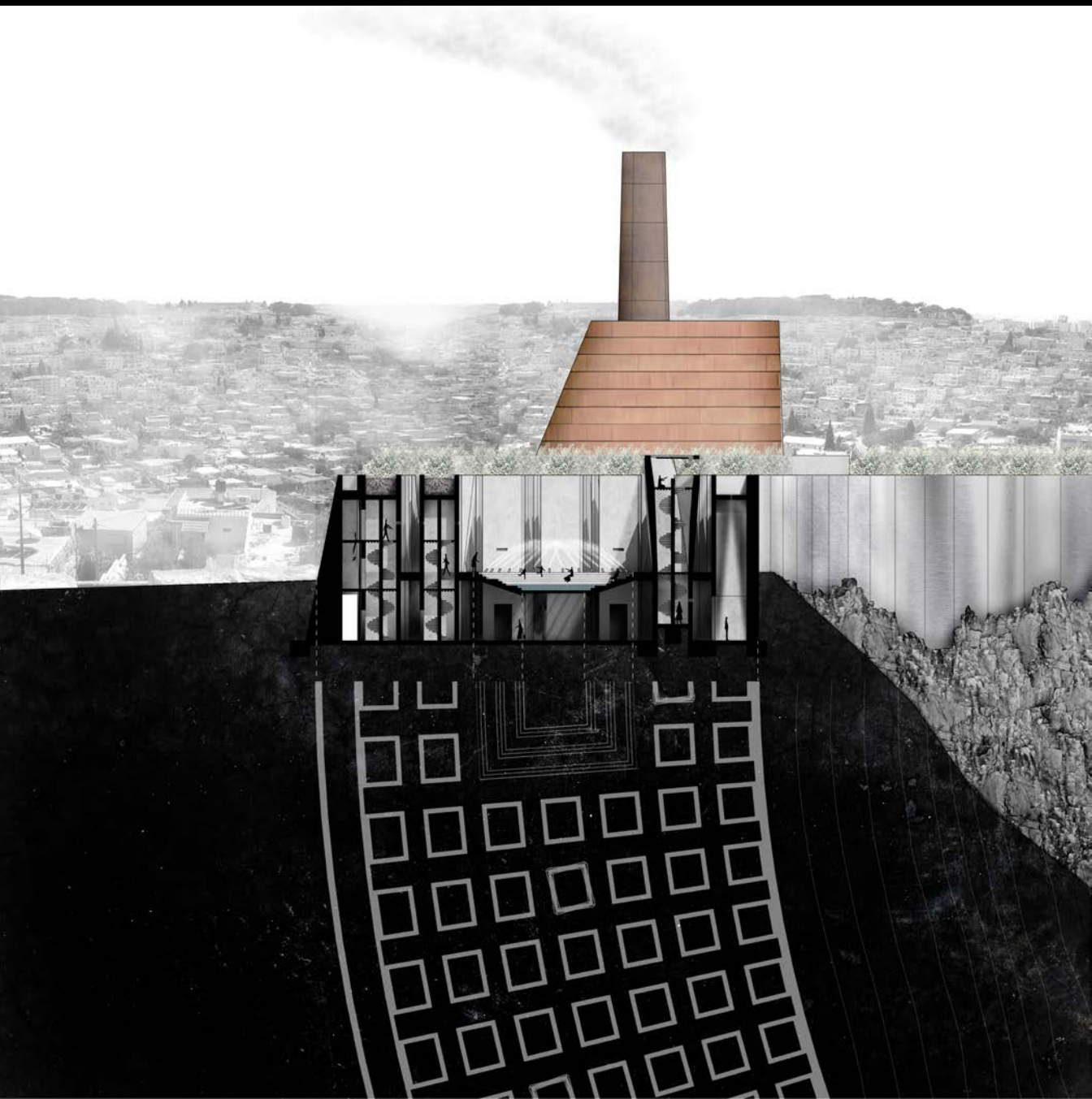




Unannounced to Palestinians, Israeli points of surveillance infiltrate these spaces of ablation from below, architecturalizing the intricate spatial relationships that both sides subject each other to.

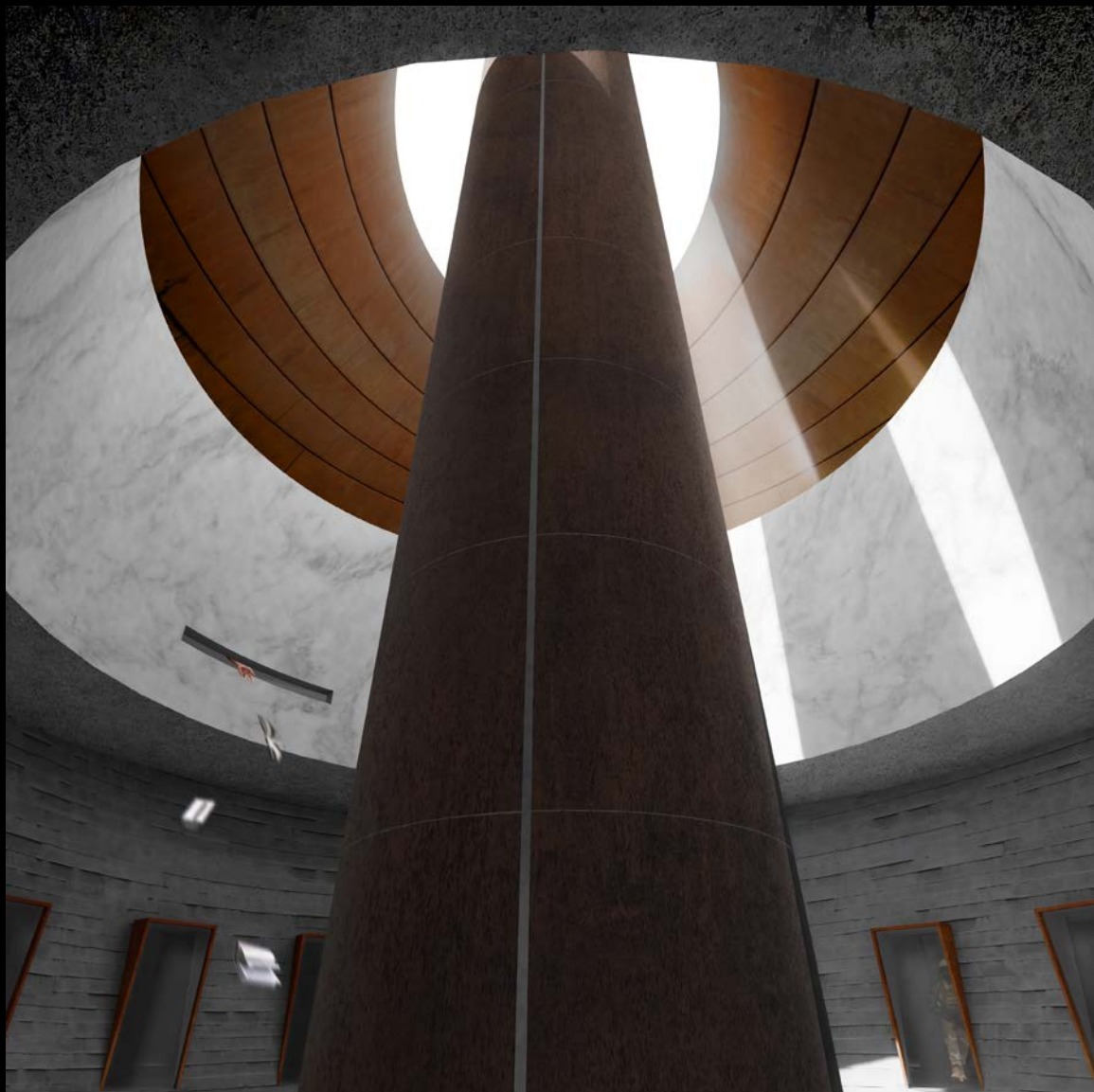




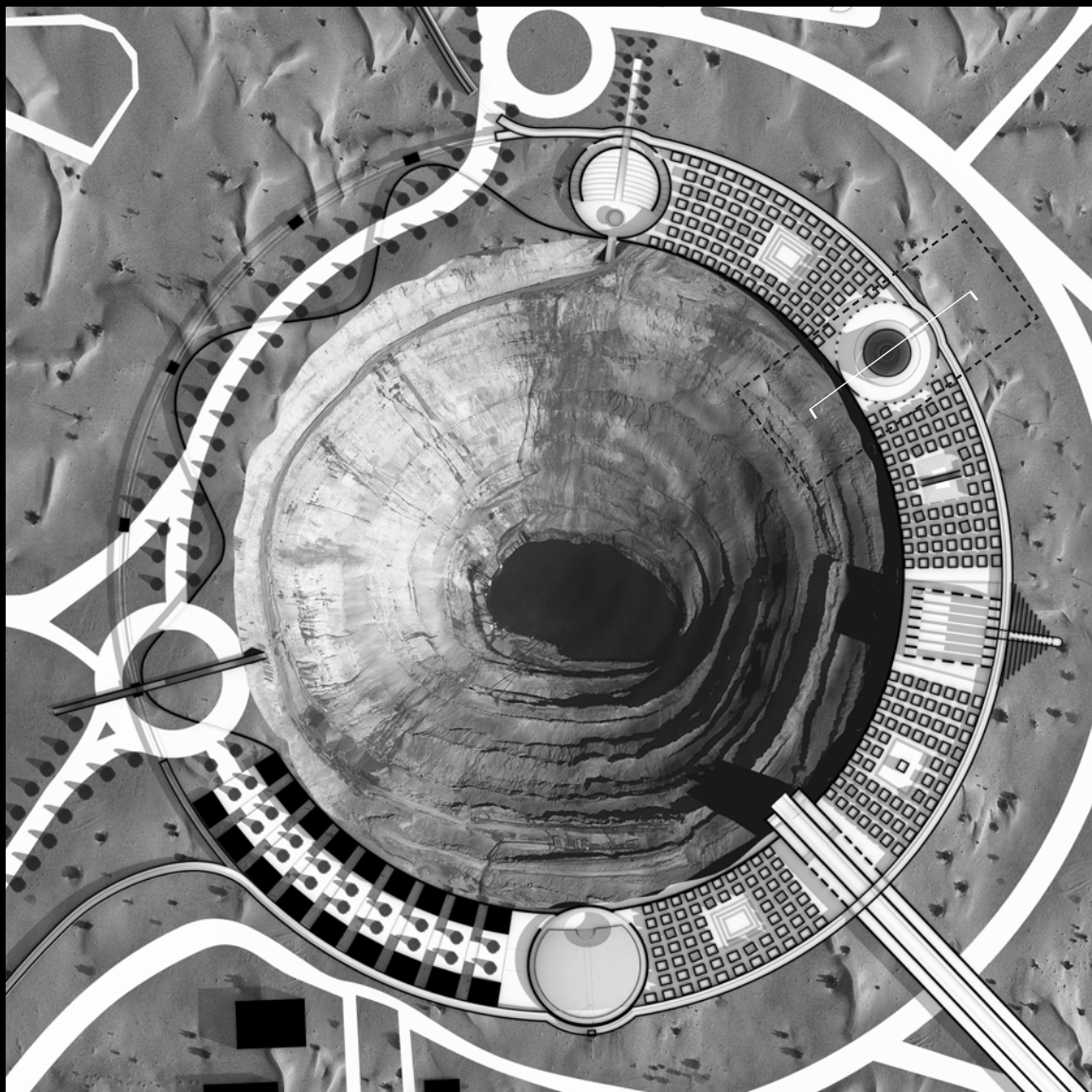


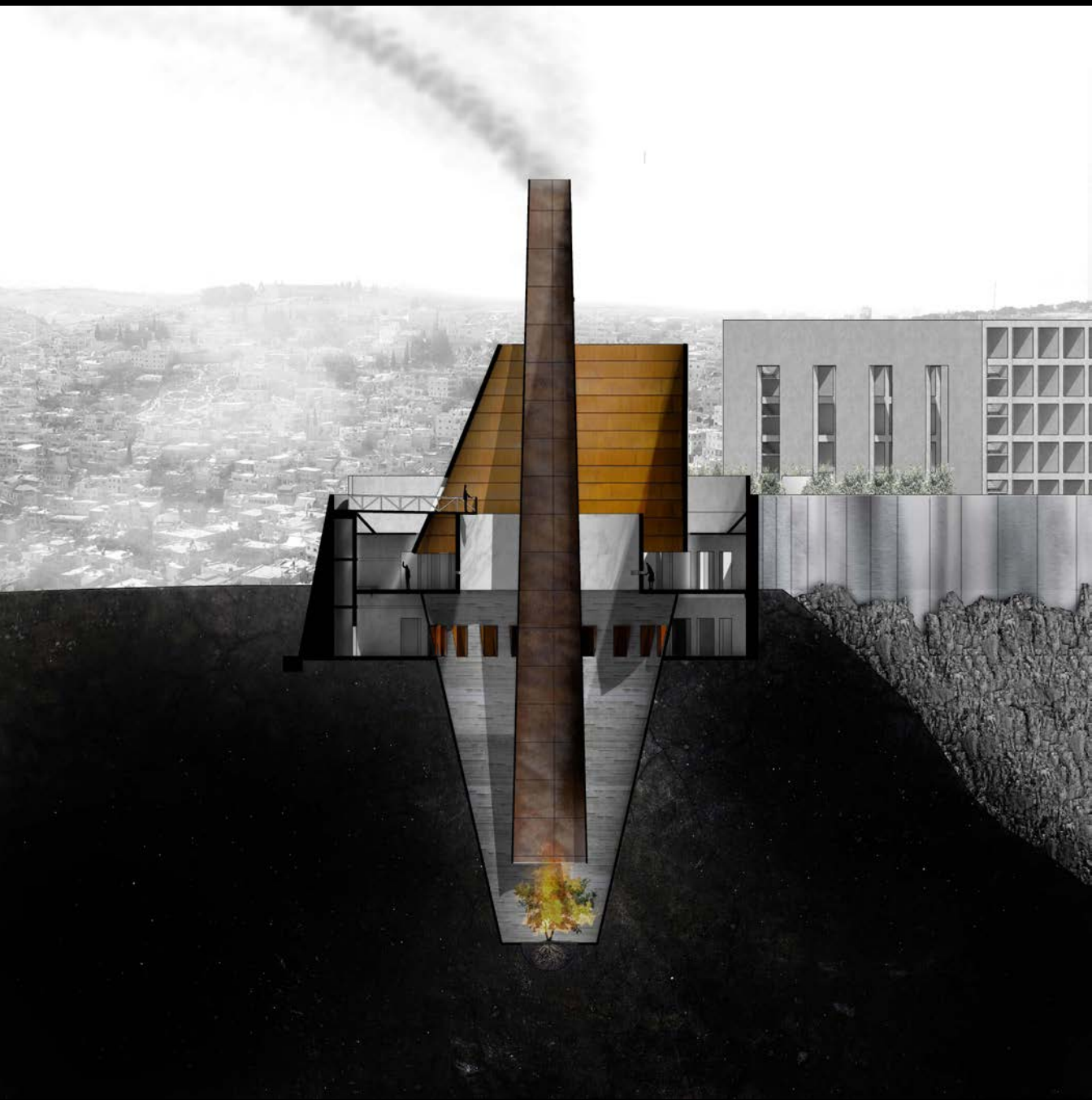


The Bag Check. The conceptualization of this space references the Jewish relationship with the Wailing Wall. Wishes are written on notes, placed in the wall, and never seen again. any prohibited items are placed in the opening of the bag check and dropped into the fire as sacrificial offerings.



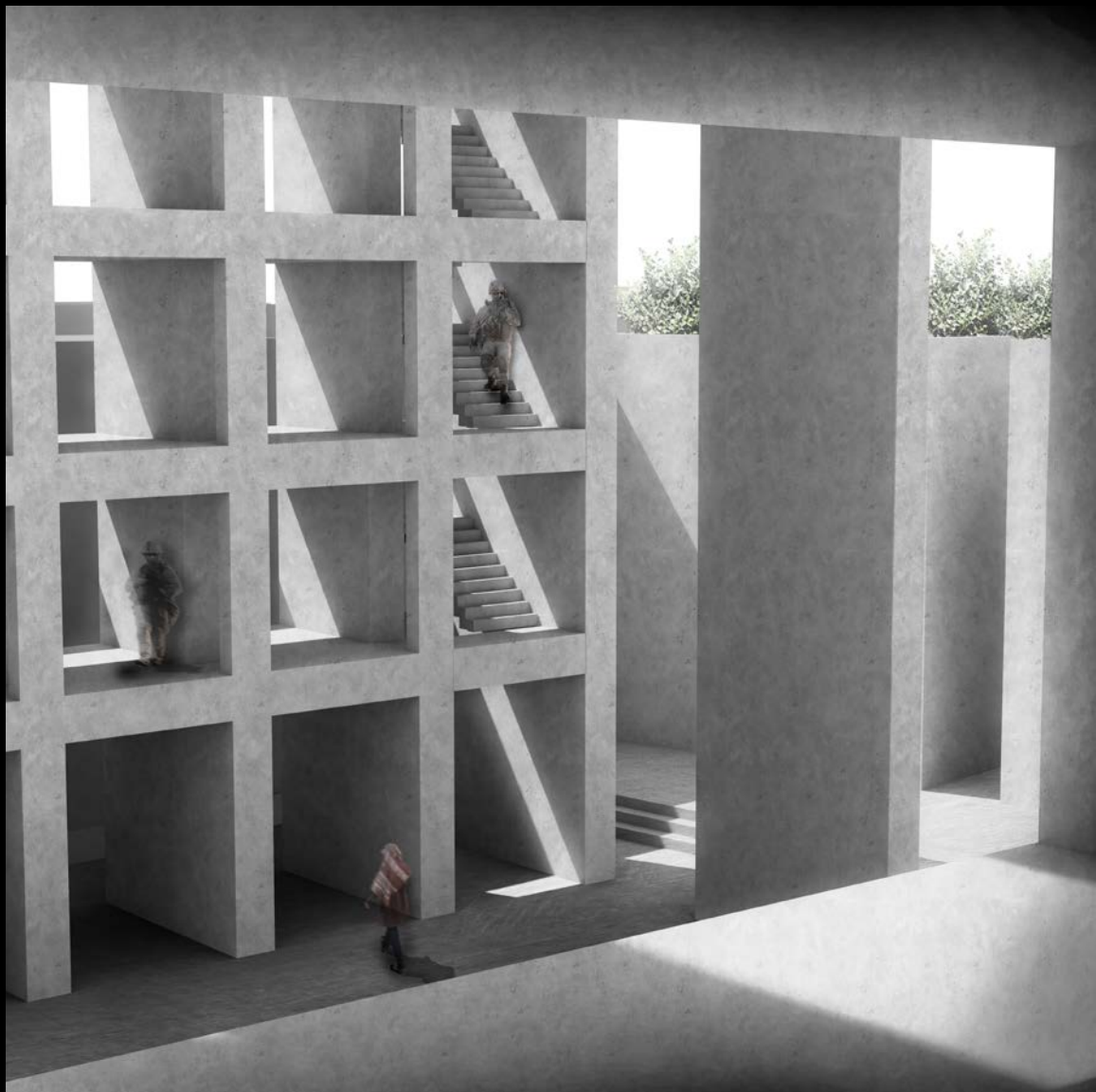
In this case, Israeli's viewing from below see items falling to the fire without seeing the people they belonged to.



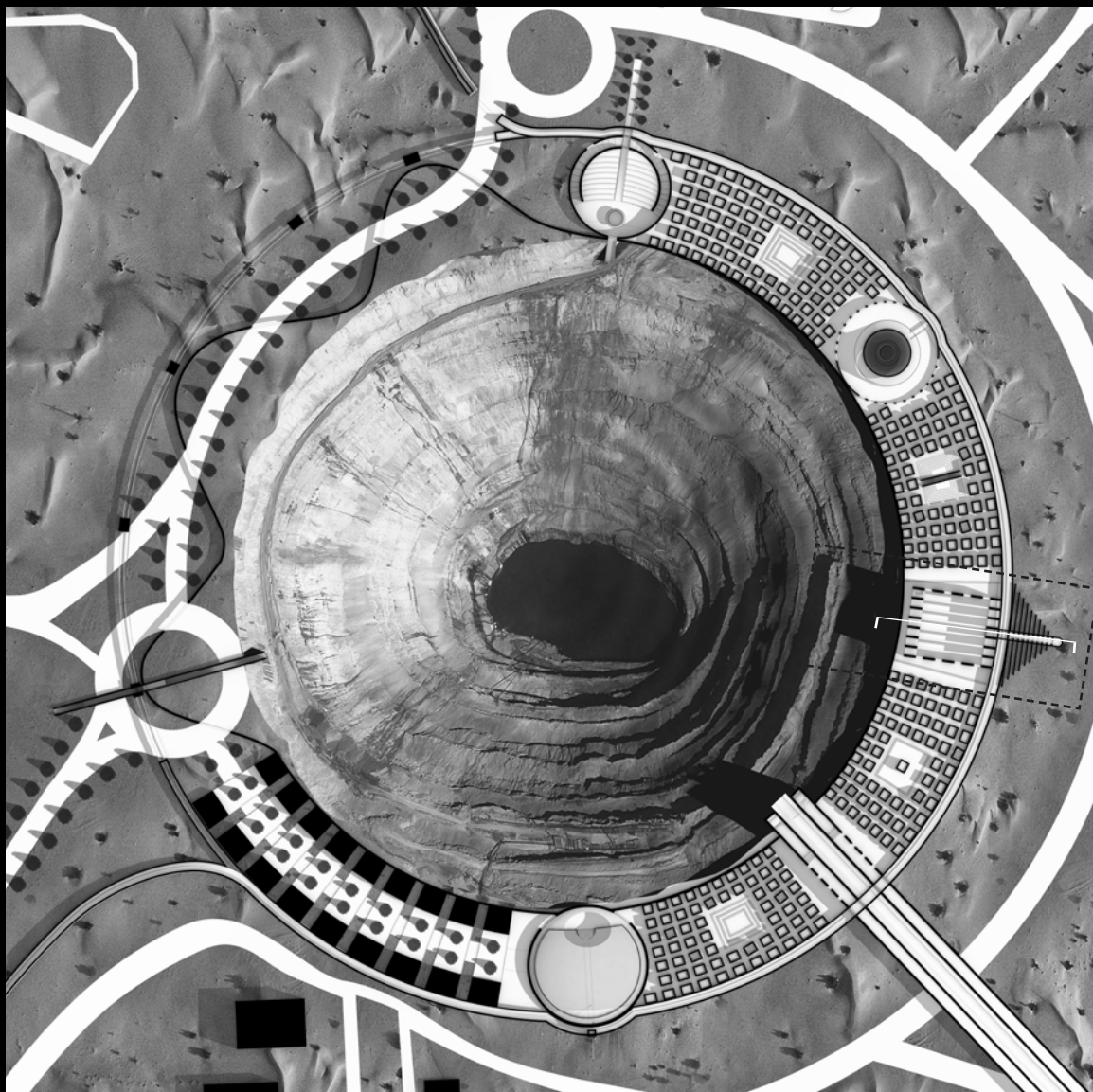


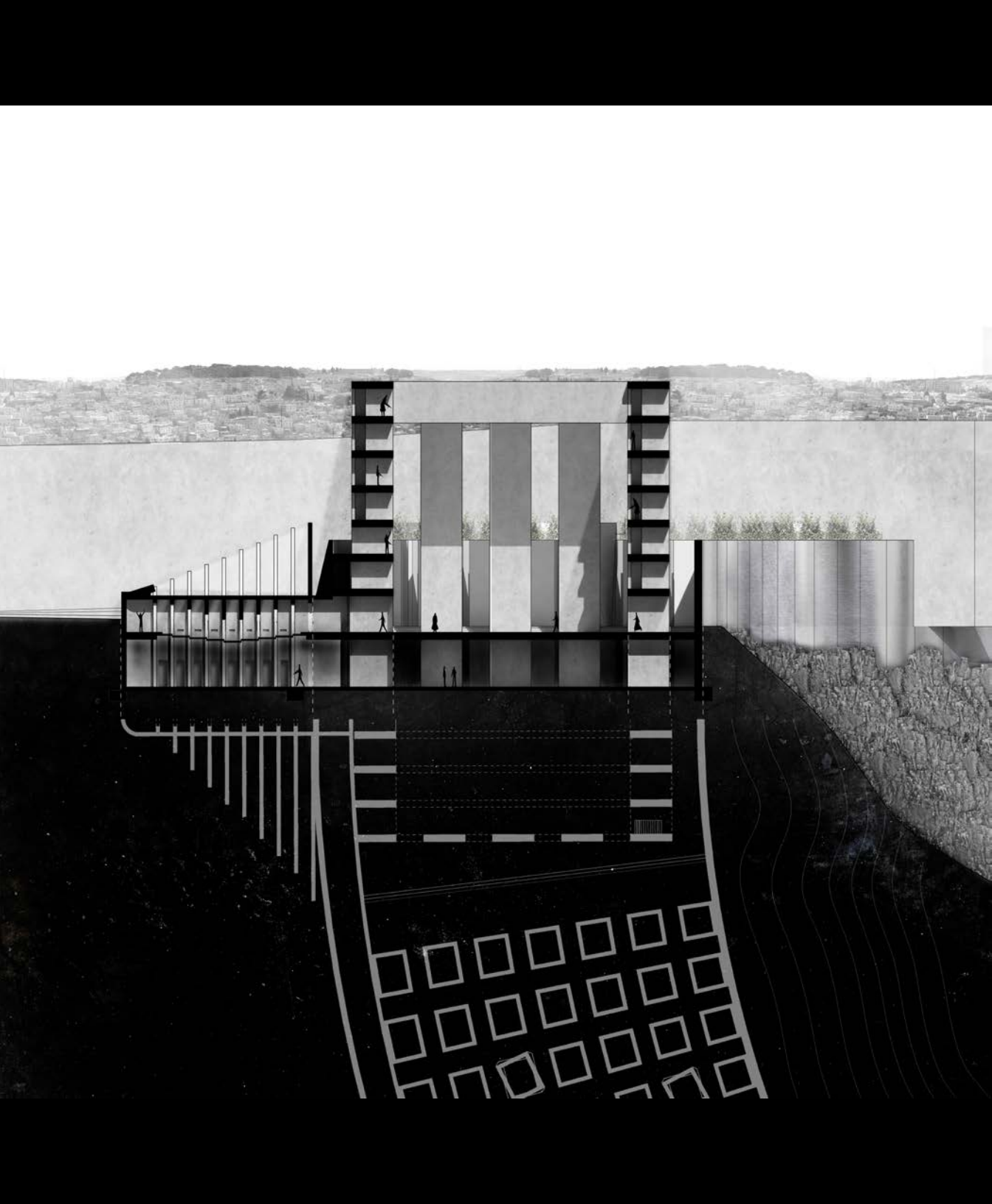


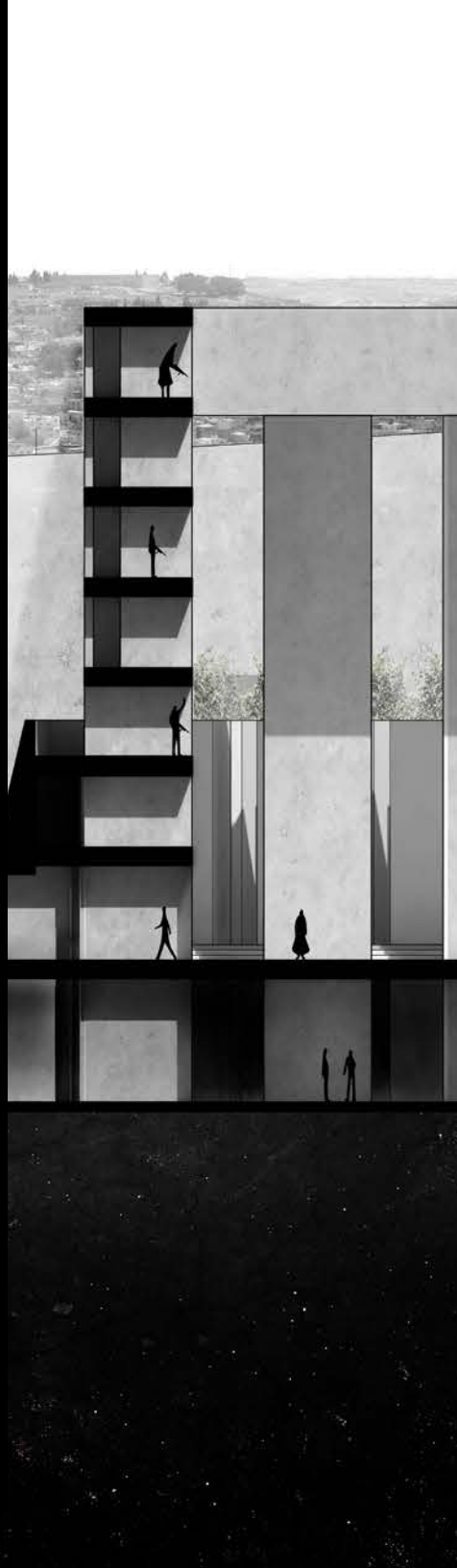
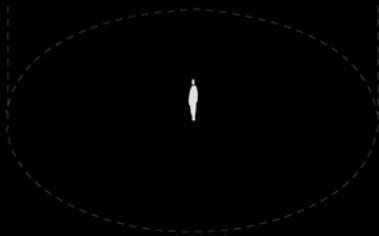
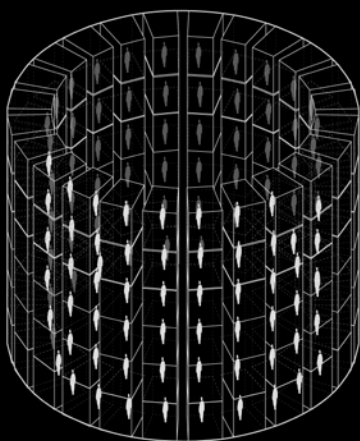
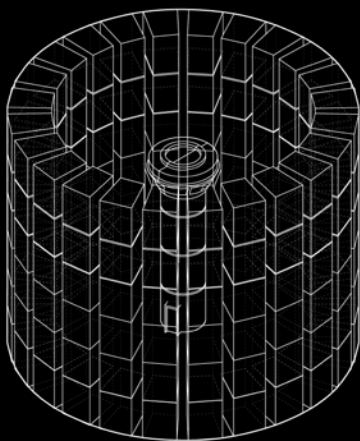
The body check is the first place where Israeli's and Palestinians are in full view of each other. The relationship between observer and observed is revealed in a dramatic panoptic space.

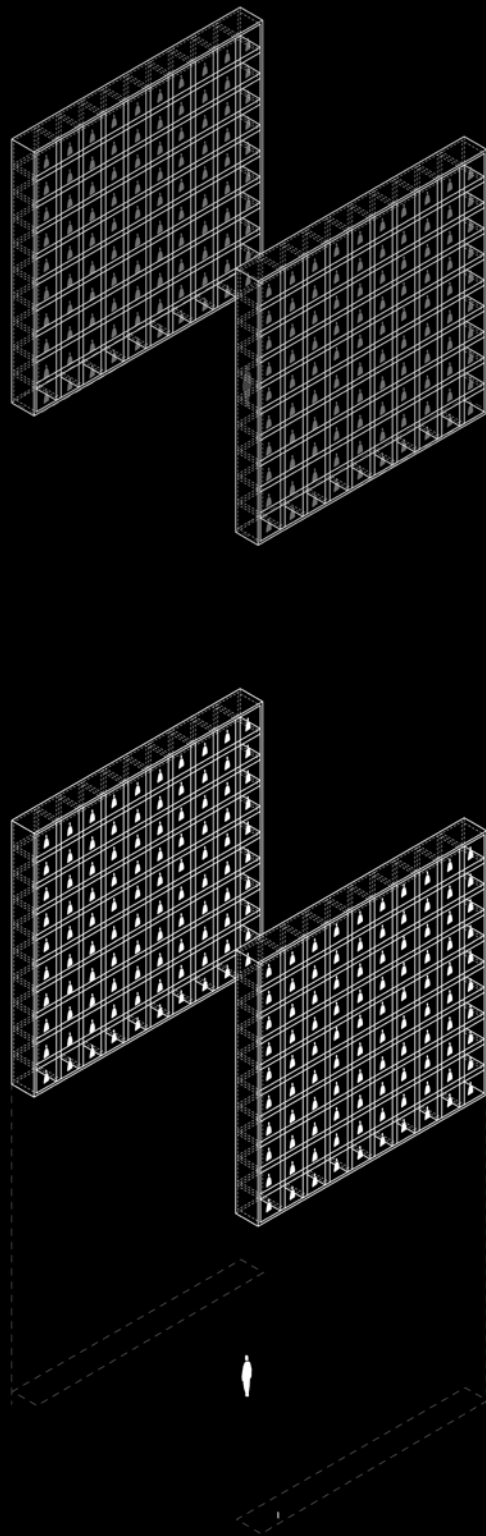


Collectively as silhouettes peering down onto those passing through, Israeli soldiers who would otherwise exist in watchtowers are exposed to the perpetual light.



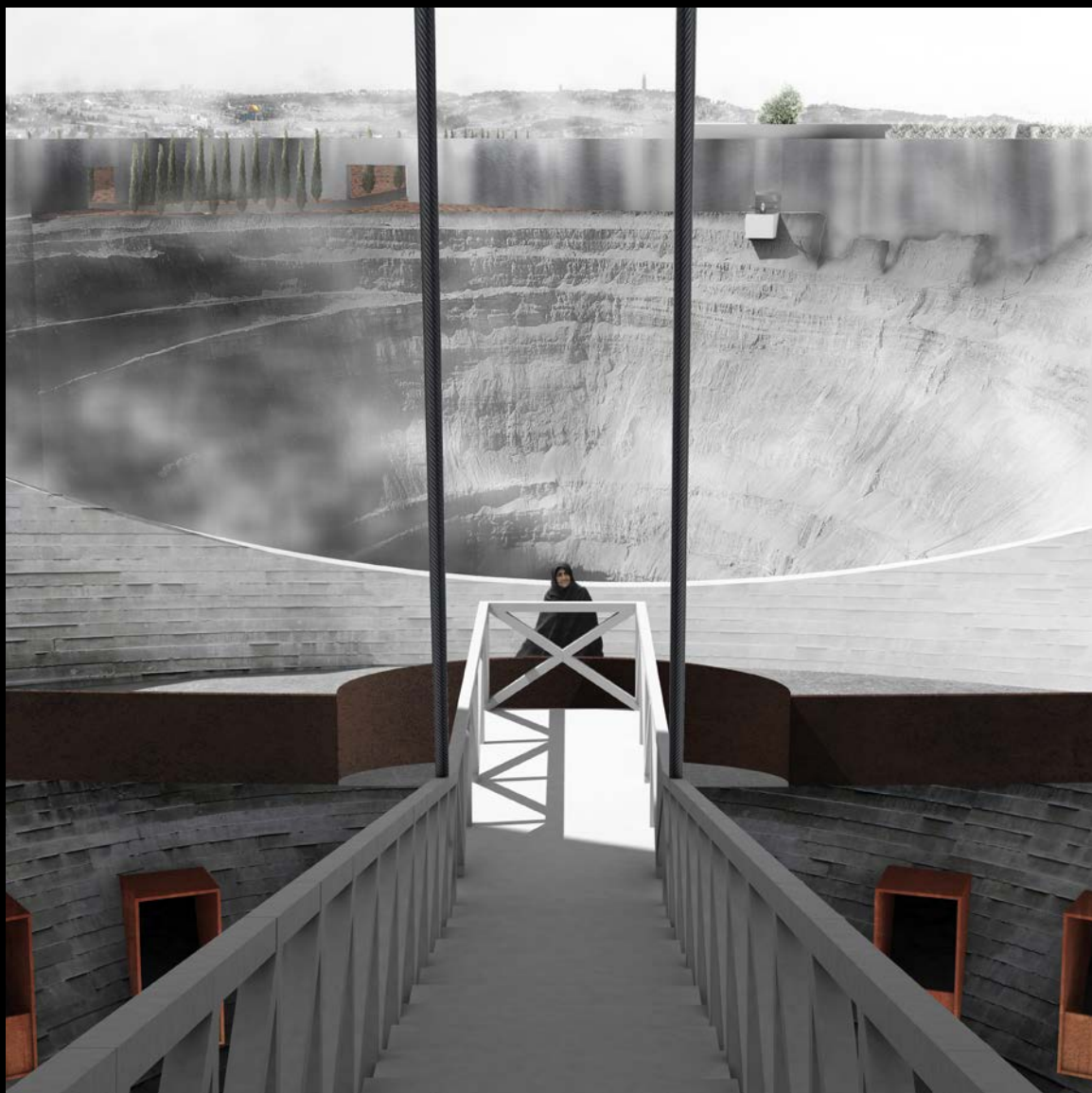




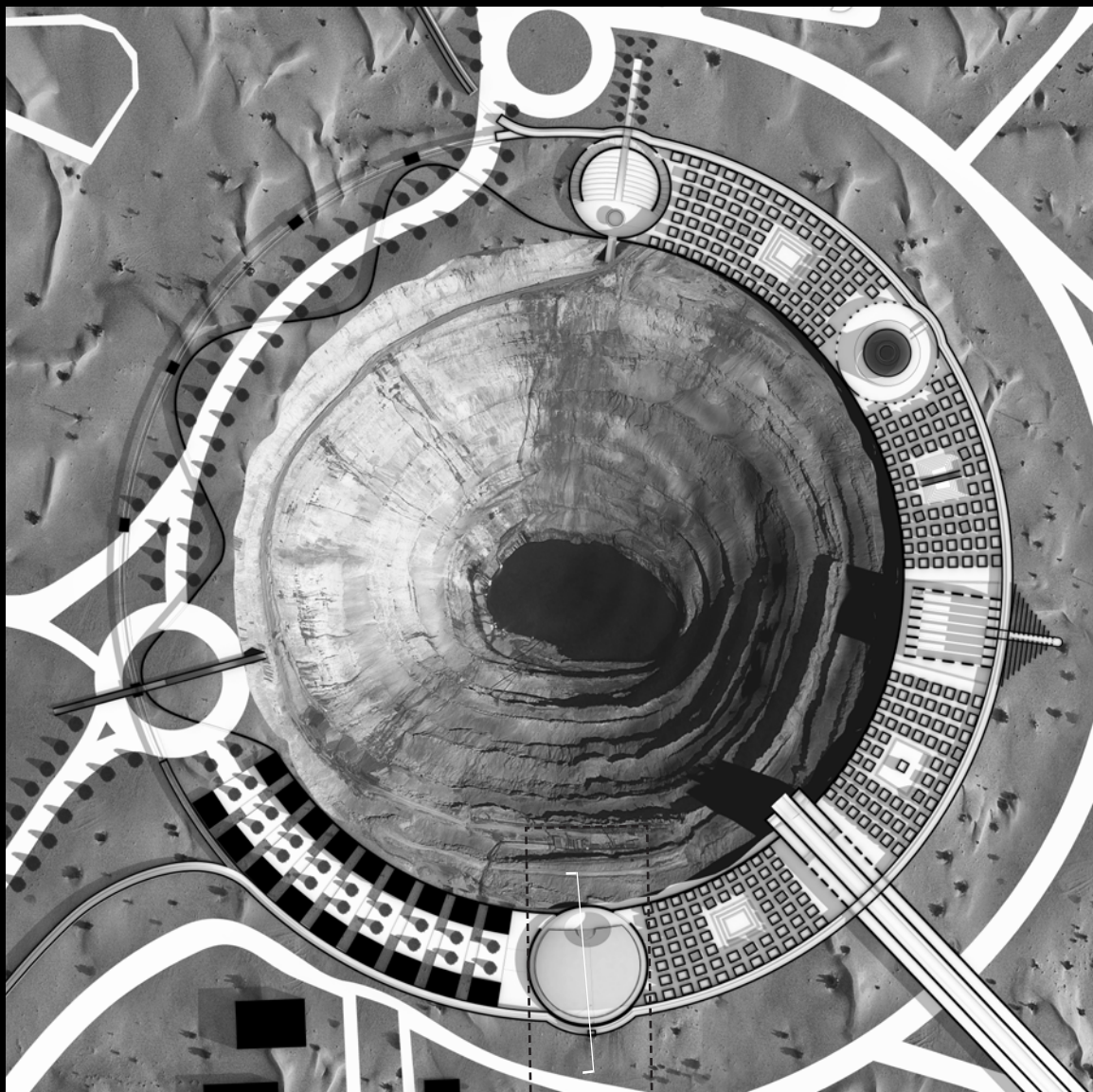


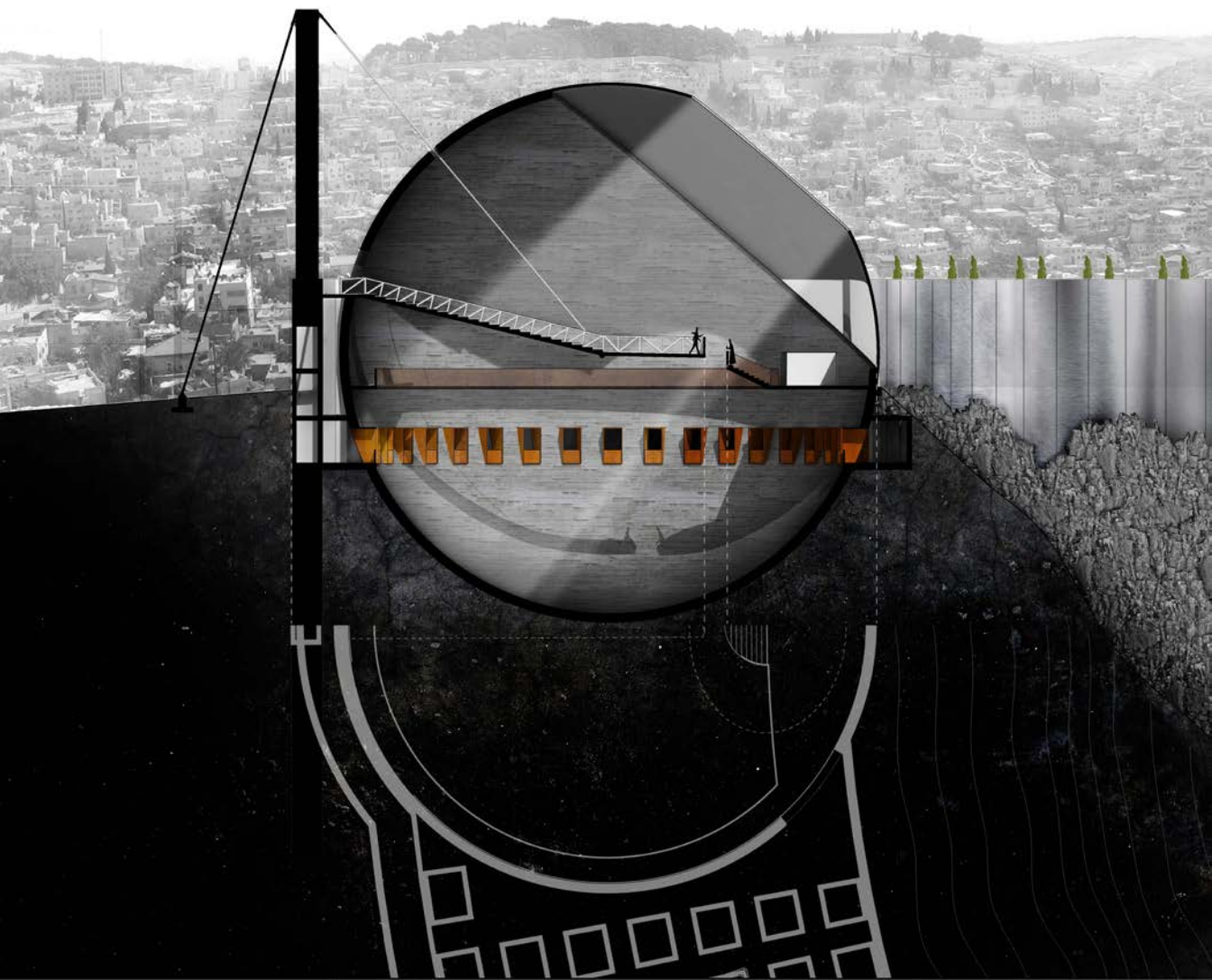


And lastly, the point of contact. Taking from the annunciation paintings which began this project, the two figures meet in the light, just as the angel Gabriel descended from the heavens to meet the Virgin Mary. An Israeli soldier appears out of the darkness and into the light to check the identification of a Palestinian citizen who wishes to return to Jerusalem.



Here in full view, the central void is revealed in its entirety for both sides to anguish. The void, accompanied by the layers of spaces that wrap this absurd border crossing, serve to remind us of the conflict, everything lost, and everything still necessary for peace to exist.





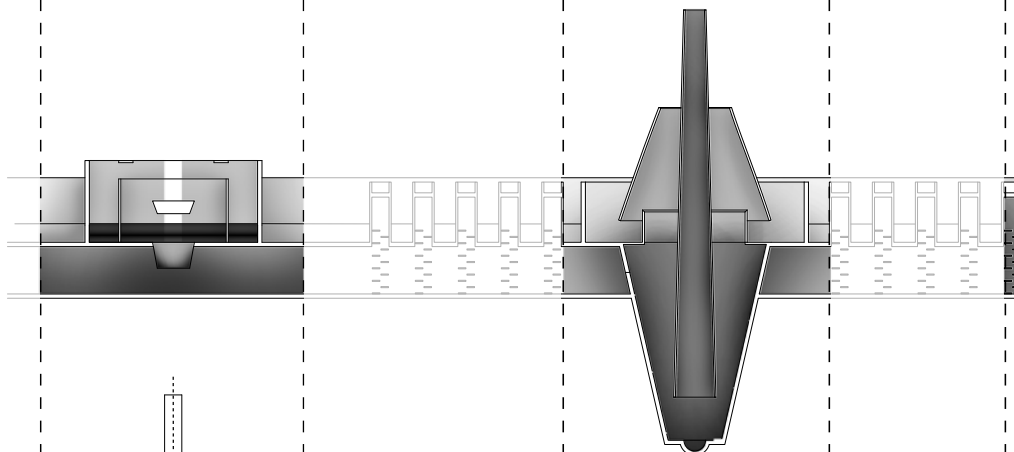
7

APPENDIX

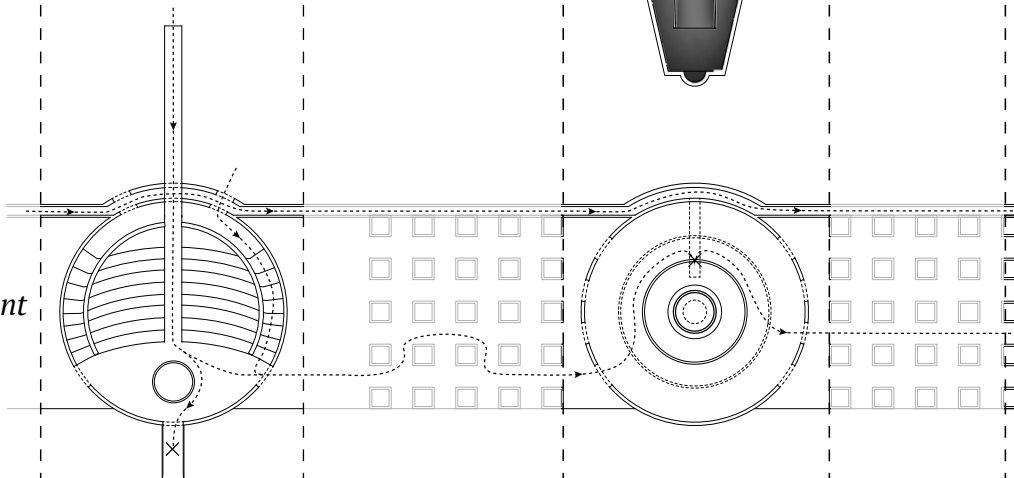
Action

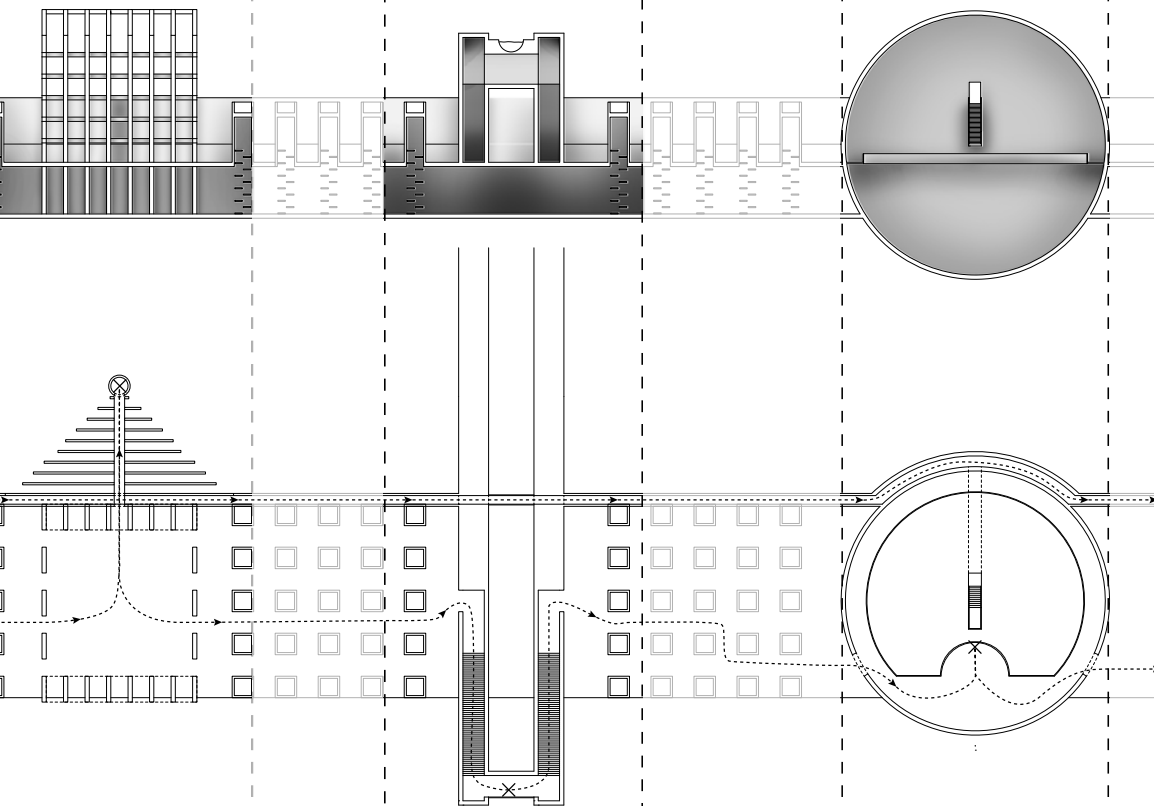


Space

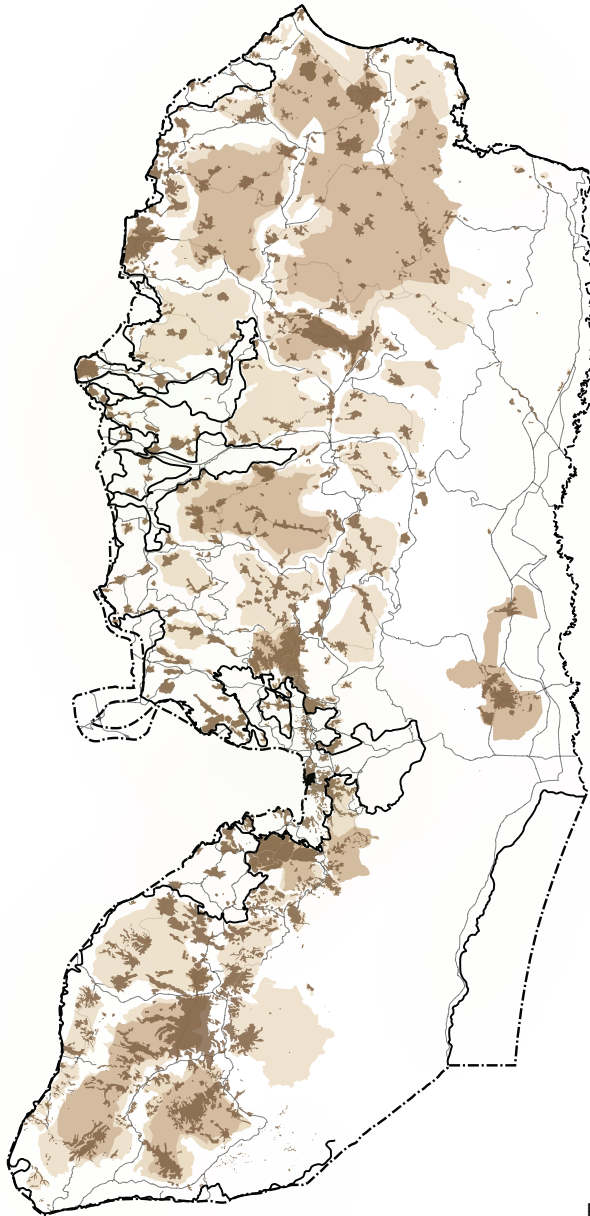


Movement



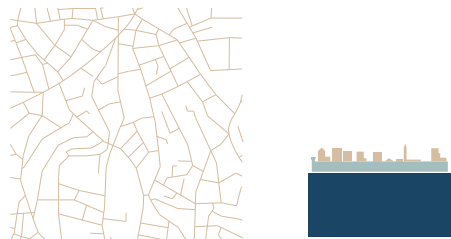


Palestinian Enclaves



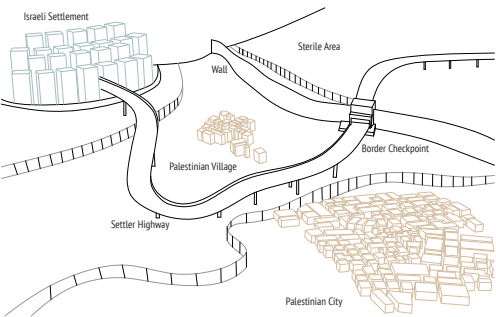
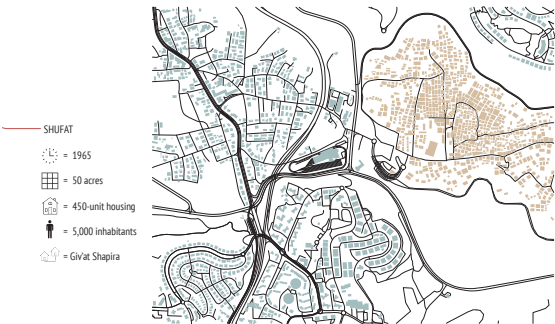
Shoshan, Malkit. Atlas of the
Conflict: Israel - Palestine.
Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010, 2010.

PALESTINIAN ENCLAVES IN THE WEST BANK

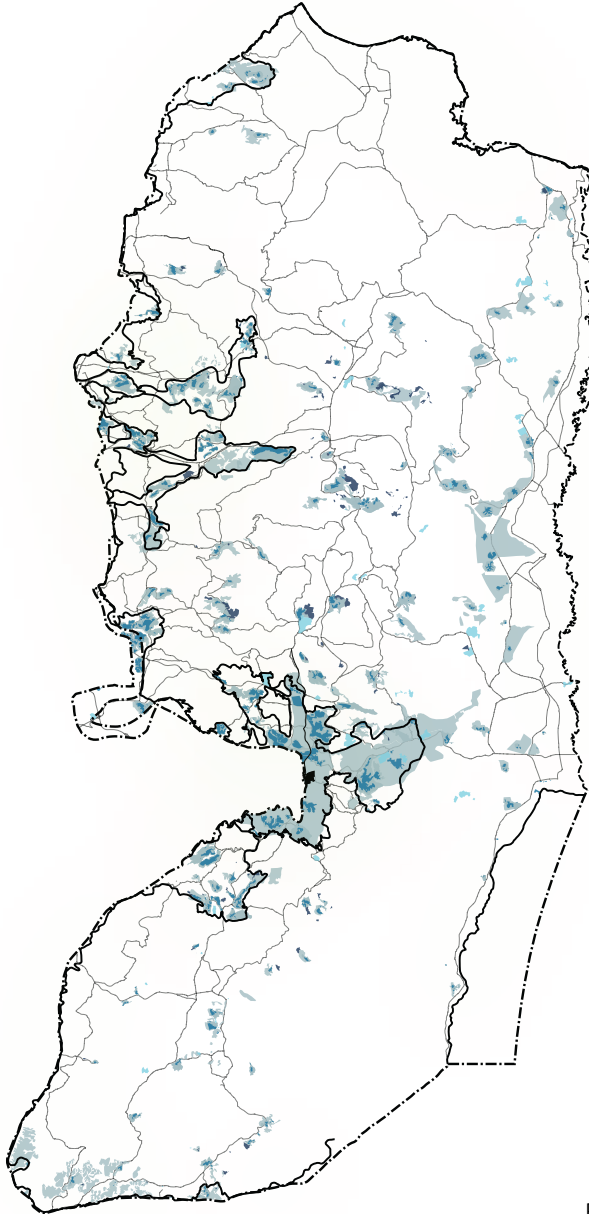


intricate, entangled villages

enclosed cities and towns

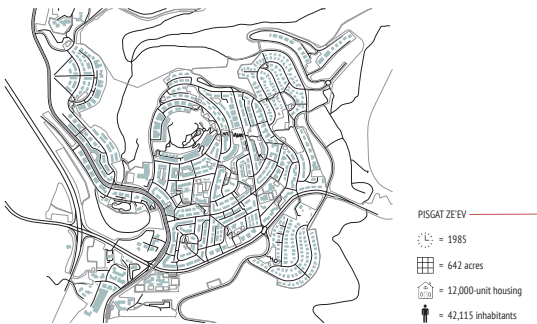
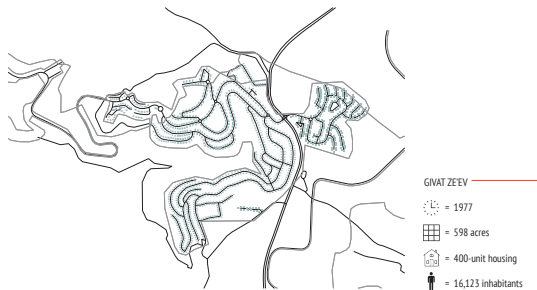
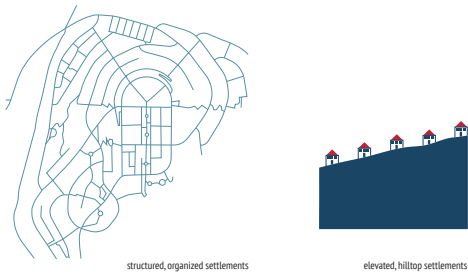


Israeli Settlements



Shoshan, Malkit. Atlas of the
Conflict: Israel - Palestine.
Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010, 2010.

ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE WEST BANK

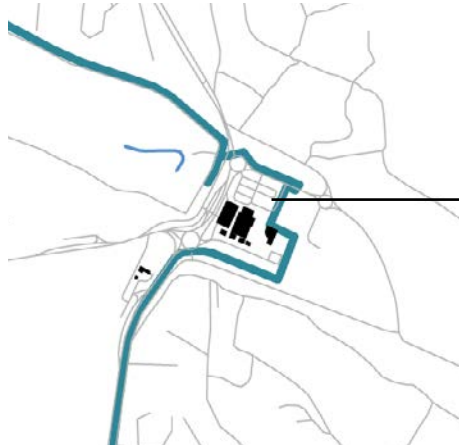


POSSIBILITIES FOR URBAN INTERVENTION



Pisgat Ze'ev
Israeli
Settlement

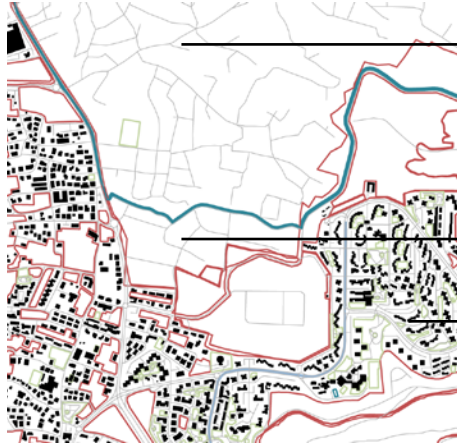
Anata
Palestinian Enclave &
Refugee Camp



Qualandiya Checkpoint



**Jerusalem
Airport**



Al-Ram
Palestinian Enclave

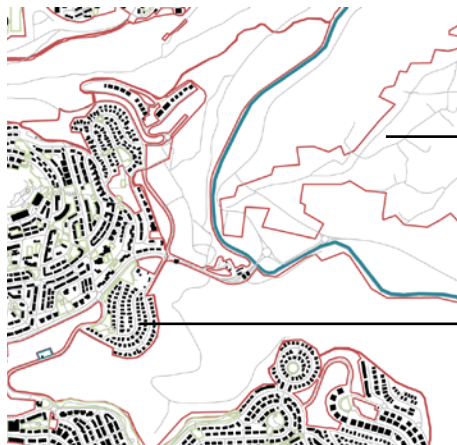


Dahait al'Barid
Palestinian Enclave

Pisgat Ze'ev
Israeli
Settlement

**Shufat Refugee
Camp**
Palestinian Enclave

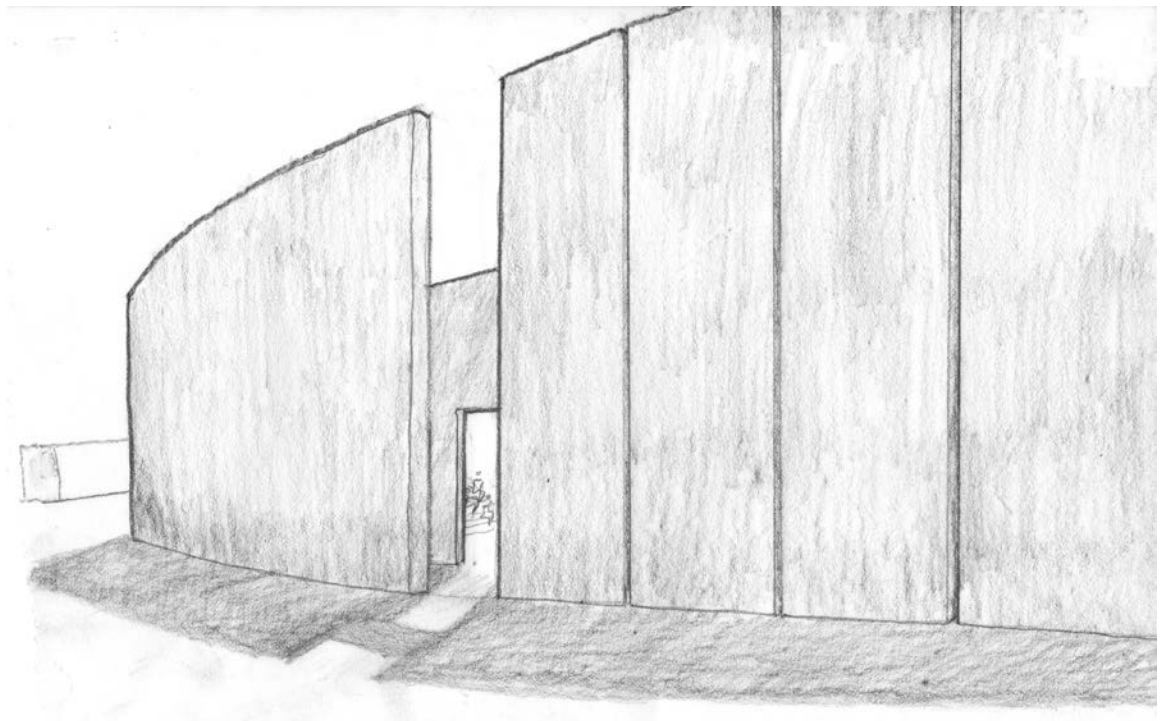
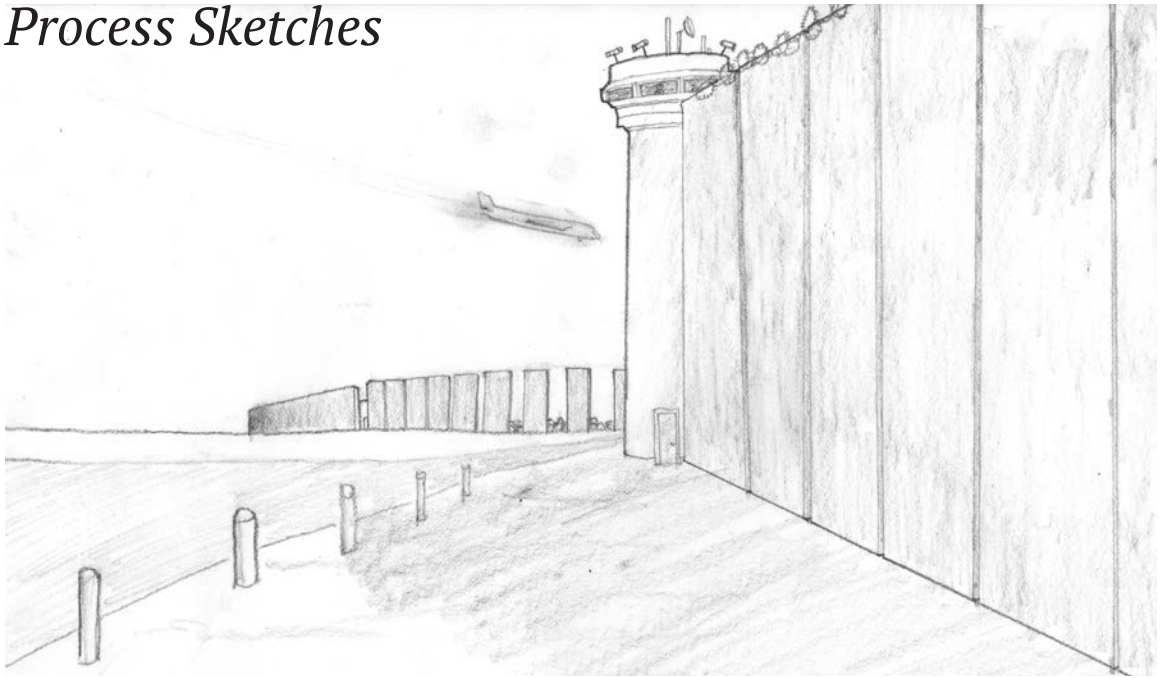
Giv'at Shapira
Israeli
Settlement

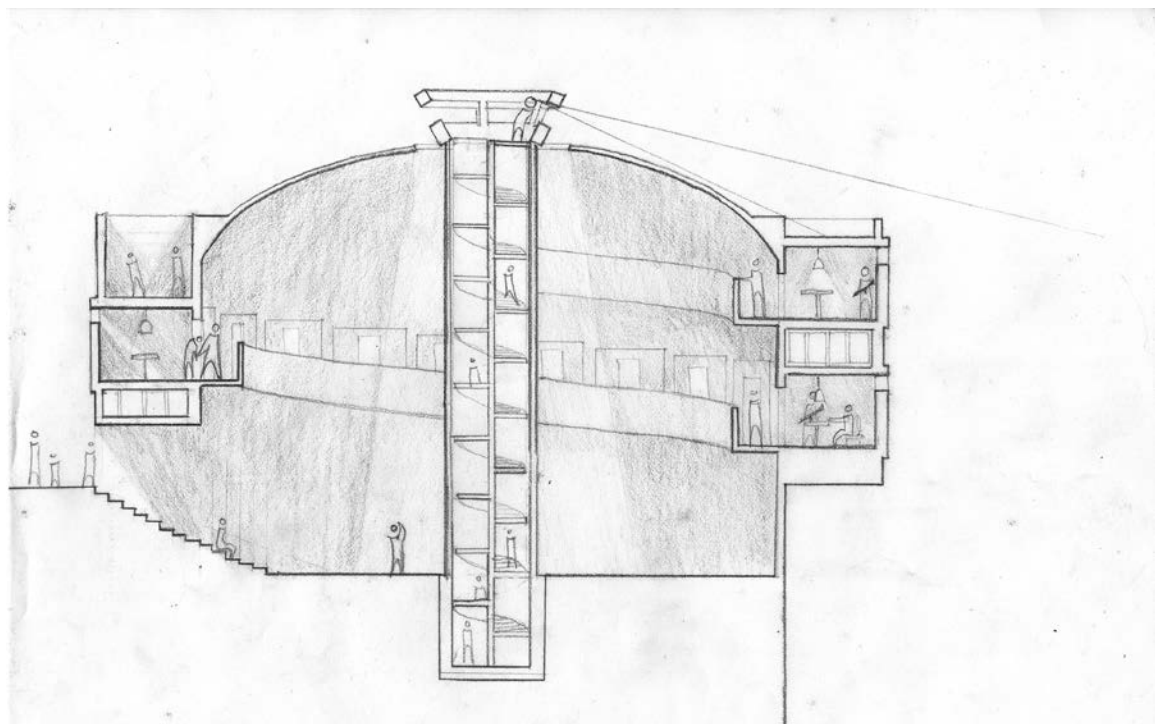
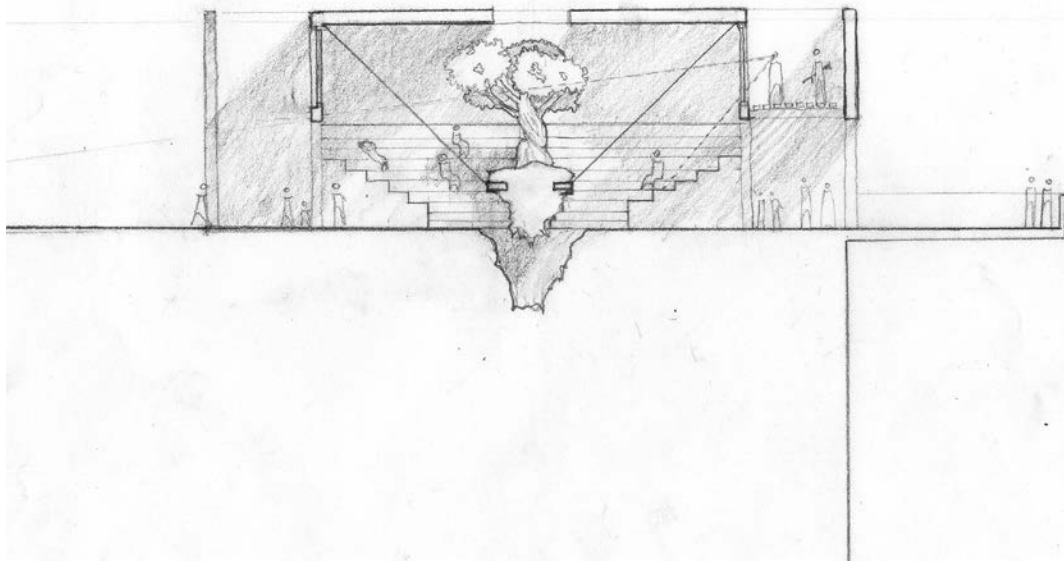


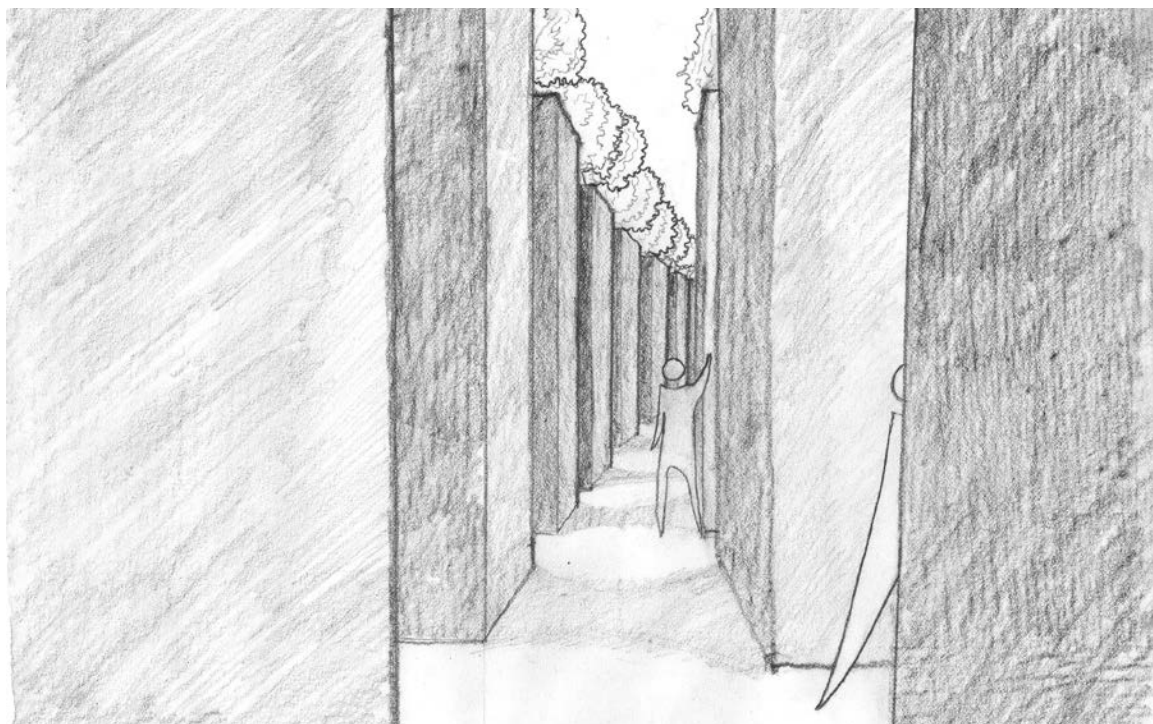
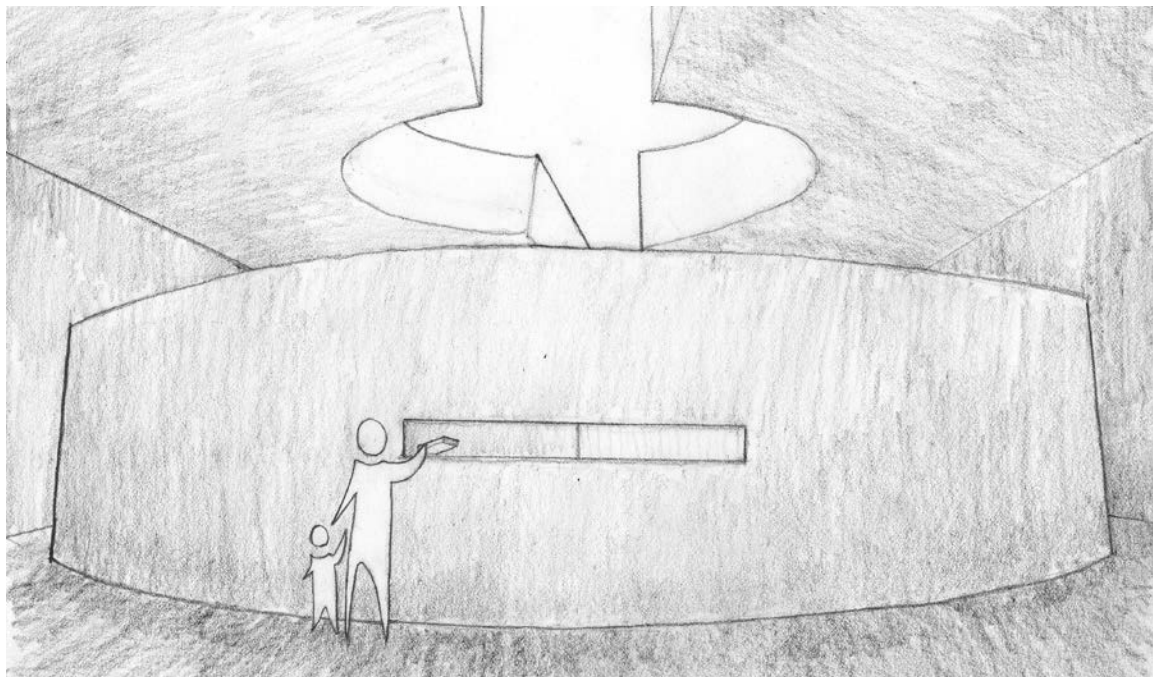
Hizma
Palestinian Enclave

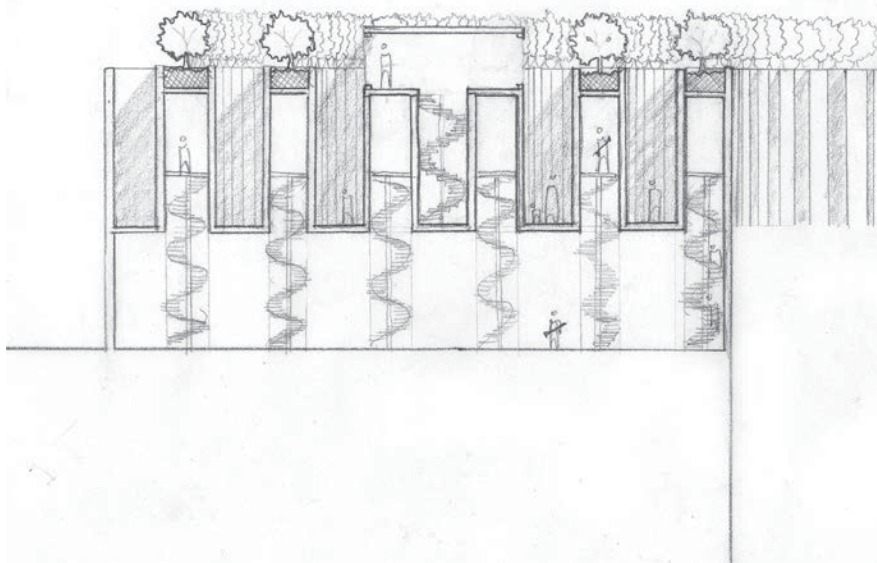
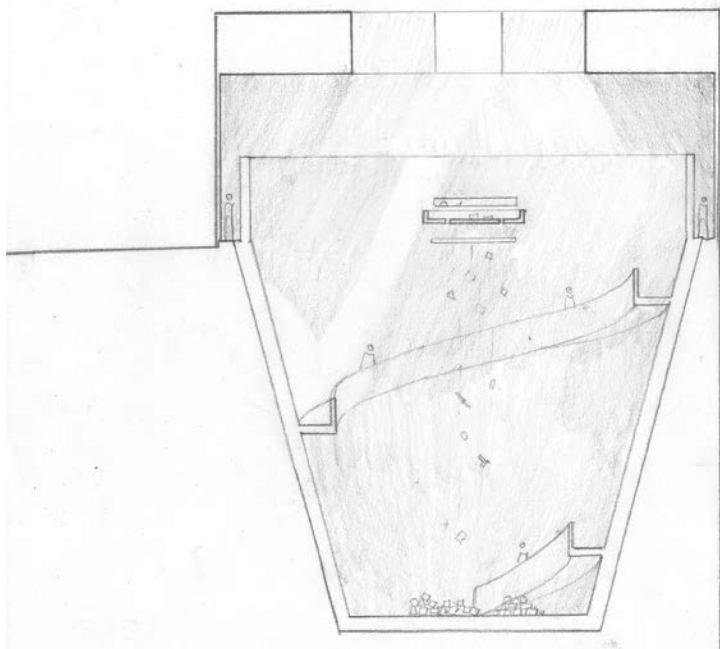
Pisgat Ze'ev
Israeli
Settlement

Process Sketches









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